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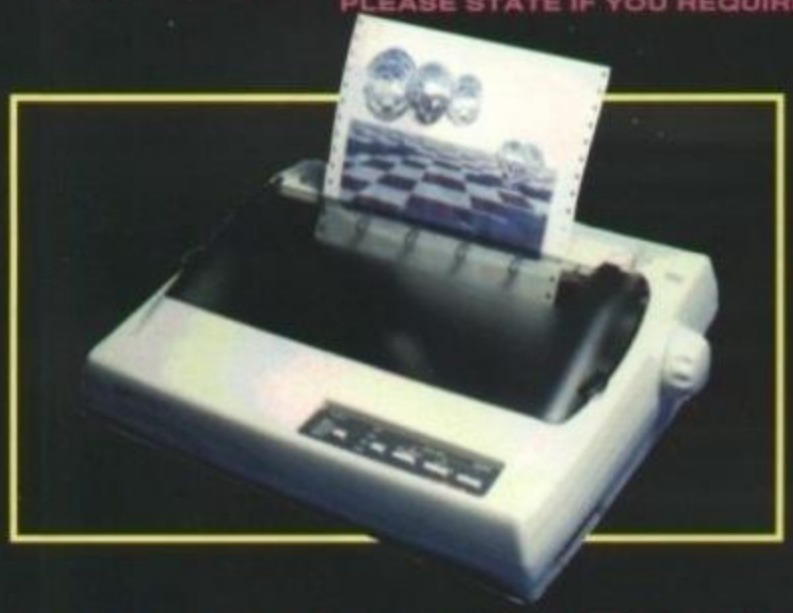

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1993

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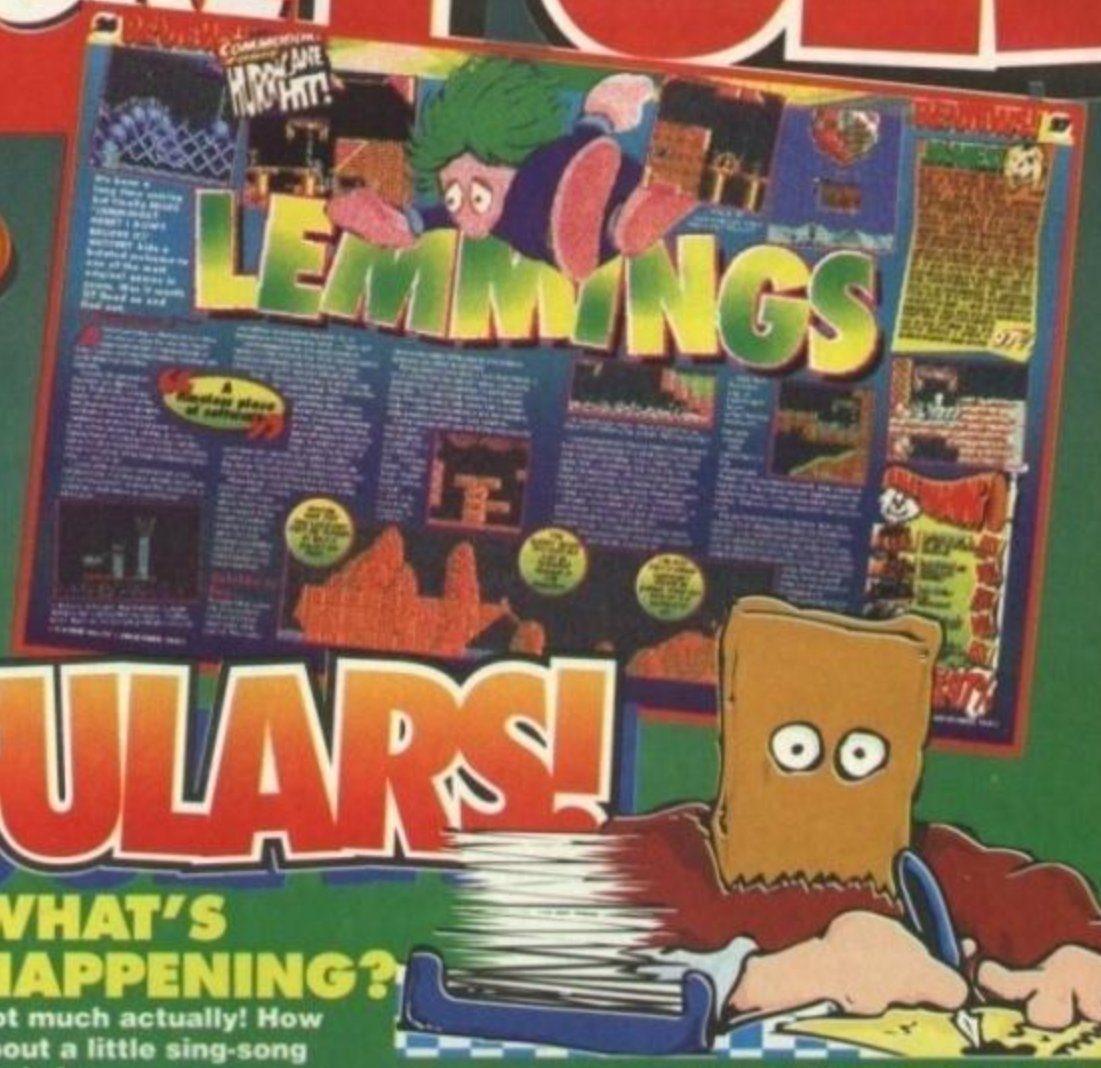

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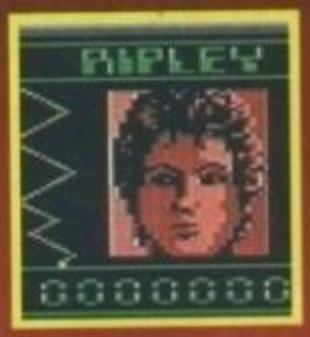
REEL ACTION

It's action with a side salad of strategy we bring you this month, not to mention an utterly wonderful playable demo. Then again, if adventures are more up your alley fret not. Be it text or arcade, we've got 'em as well!

ZOIDS
Forget Skynet and T2 — here's the real war of the machines. A corking icon driven action fantasy to really get your talons into.

ALIENS
Alien 3 (reviewed this month) is a bit special, mind you, it's predecessor's no slouch either — see for yourself.



E-MOTION
Superlative puzzle-orientated arcade game. It's got real balls, you know...

EASY LIVES
The world's best-looking hack prog returns with fistfulls of lives, pockets packed with extra energy and a bag slung over its shoulder, bulging with ammo and smart bombs for all your favourite games.

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WHAT'S HAP

Well, it's been a strange month. It began on a low note with the departure of Chris Hayward to SNES FORCE, and sank lower towards the end of our schedule when Miles decided it'd be a great idea to crash his car into a stationary vehicle. Obviously, that doesn't really affect you people out there in the real world, but it could have — the entire COMMODORE FORCE editorial team (all two of us) in a car crash... who'd write everything?

Anyway, gripe aside, this month's possibly our most feature packed to date and... yes, we've even got a few reviews. Okay, so they're only 'little-known' titles such as *Mayhem in Monsterland*, *Lemmings* and *Alien 3*, but I suppose we'll get by. Back to the Feature's...um, back, and we hope you appreciate the *Lemmings* poster — if only you knew the rush it was to arrange it...

Also, thanks to all those that took the time to fill in and return Issue Ten's survey — the response has been almost overwhelming! As well as acting upon points raised, we'll also be including a Readers' All-Time Top 100 in next month's COMMODORE FORCE. It would appear a few of our choices were a little contraversial — but I suppose it's a matter of personal preferances. Rest assured, though, *this* top 100 will be as near to a perfect indication of the most popular C64 games ever as you'll get.

Drive Carefully...!

James!

James Price **Editor**

PD PUBLISHING

Pensnett PD — a predominatly C64-orientated PD library — have just anounced the launch of a periodical news-letter to complement (and promote) their exisiting PD services. Their Software Director Dean Kelly is currently urging C64 owners to submit contributions such as ideas, small adverts and the like or simply submit their address so they can be included on Pensnett's mailing list. According to Dean, the news-letter will also distributed through other Public Domain suppliers and 'selected software suppliers'. It's also free — Pensnett intend to have adverts from comercial companies such as software houses to subsidise the production and duplication costs. We at COMMODORE FORCE wish them the best of luck. Contact Pensnett at: 21 Tiled House Lane, Pensnett, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 4LG.

GAME ASSEMBLY

Ever wanted to program top-qaulity C64 games? You have? Obviously, you're helped immensely by *our* technical pages, but M.REZA (strange name, we know) may have a more in-depth answer for all you techie types out there. Called 'Guide to 6510 Assembler', it is just that — a guide. Unfortunately, Brian Strain wasn't availible to review it this month, but rest assured he'll get his grubby mitts on it for Issue #13. From a relatively unqualified point of view, the rest of us thought it looked pretty impressive — it comes complete with a 'free' tape including a PD monitor and tape turbo utility. It also has pages and pages of meaningful numbers. Unfortunately, it's not going to find its way onto shop shelves, so send orders to: Vijay Gagan (C64 Guide), M.REZA, 108 Warwick Street, Greet, Birmingham B11 4QU. Alternatively, if you want expert opinion on its good and bad points, you'll have to wait until next month's Mighty Brian column...

SEGA'S (EXPENSIVE) BLOOMER

It's not important, we suppose, but there's just a small snippet of information we discovered this morning. You see, as we're based in the same building as SNES FORCE, MEGA MACHINES and SEGA MASTER FORCE, we get to see a lot of games. It just so happens that this morning (at the time of writing) *Sonic CD* arrived in for, not surprisingly, the Mega CD. Flashy graphics and many layers of parallax aside, it doesn't play too badly — there's even an interesting time-travel sideline, adding a strategic element and complementing the frenetic gameplay. Oh, and the sound's excellent too — although it lacks the original *Sonic* 'anthem' music, it's well produced and executed. Yup, all in all, it's not a bad little platform game...

So you're wondering why we're writing this, then? Well, it's simple. Mat Yeo — a member of the Mega

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PENING?

WHO'S DOING WHAT?

THE TWOSOME AND THEIR TROUBLES

JAMES PRICE

● James has been a little more cheerful than usual this month. With the Tipstergate fiasco over and done with, he's quite content to sit back and delegate all the work to Miles. 'Finish the magazine, Guttery,' he'll cheerfully exclaim, 'or you're fired.' Ahh, he's such a just and caring editor…

FAVE GAME: Mayhem

MILES GUTTERY

● So how did Miles respond? 'I can't take it any more,' he said. 'I'm so upset I think I'll crash my beloved car. Admittedly, it's not the wisest move I'll have ever made, but, hey — it could be fun.' Yeah, like great Miles. What's your next trick? Atom bomb juggling?

FAVE GAME: Lemmings

Machines' editorial team — has completed it already. Obviously, he hasn't seen every screen the game has to offer, but nonetheless, he's ploughed through sixty pound's worth of game in the very morning it arrived. *Mayhem*'s been in the office for a few days now, and we're still barely managing to reach Pipeland. Makes you think, doesn't it…

TOP TWENTY

Well, we finally realised that Chart Chatter wasn't as good as it could have been, so here's the new, improved charts. As you can see, *Street Fighter 2* is finally on its way out, with Matt Groening's jaundiced jokers occupying the top spot.

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BIG BOX 2

...BUT ISN'T IT TIME YOU DID?

JAMESY: I can't beiive they've scrapped Chart Chatter, Smiles.

SMILES: They couldn't get rid of us though, could they mate?

JAMESY: You're right there, Smiles. It may be a bit cold and wet on the Subs page, but it's a life, I suppose.

SMILES: So what are we supposed to be doing here, mate?

JAMESY: We're selling subscriptions of COMMODORE FORCE to readers. You see, this is the page in the magazine where we tell everyone just how good COMMODORE FORCE is, andI just why they'd be advised to subscribe and receive thirteen issues a year in a chatty and informative style.

SMILES: Wowzers — is that really thirteen whole issues, mate?

JAMESY: You bet your socks, Smiles. Did you know you also get a free copy of Beau Jolly's *Big Box 2* for no extra cost?

SMILES: But... but... that costs ££16.99 in the shops, Jamesy! You'll be telling me next that the thirteen issues a year isn't standard, as most other magazines only give you twelve for the equivalent price!

JAMESY: Gosh mate — you're psychic!

SMILES: Gerkins.

JAMESY: Pardon?

[A shower of gerkins rains from the sky, crushing Jamesy to death but missing Smiles by a whisker]

SMILES: Lucky I grew that whisker! Phew!

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Want a gift? You've got one, *Big Box 2* to be exact, the great compilation from Beau Jolly and it's your FREE when you purchase a subscription... now that's a bargain! Oh, and there's more — because as well as recieving the twelve issues, we'll chuck in another one for free! What more can you ask for — we'd have *dreamed* of 13 issues a year when we were kids...

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COMMODORE FORCE

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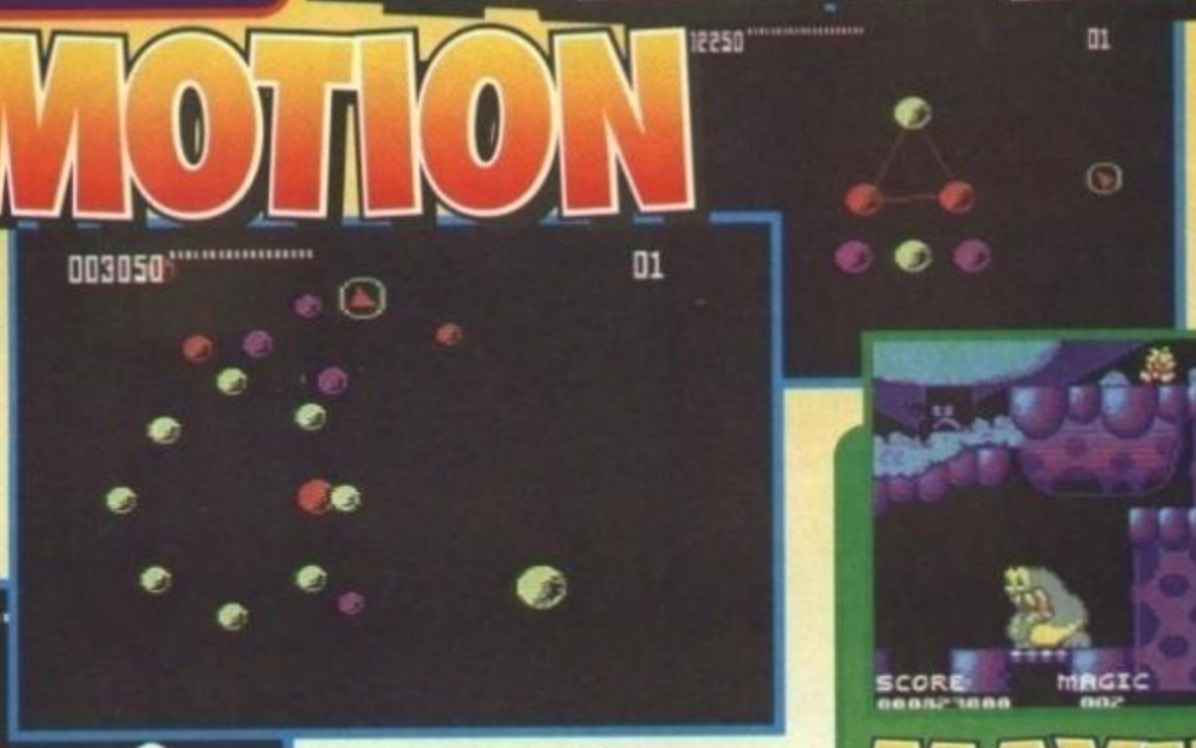
REEL A

Two more tapes packed with chilblain-curing games to put any chiropodist out of business. Simply remove your shoes, shove 'em down your socks and feel their soothing powers — better than odour eaters and without the stigma.

E-MOTION

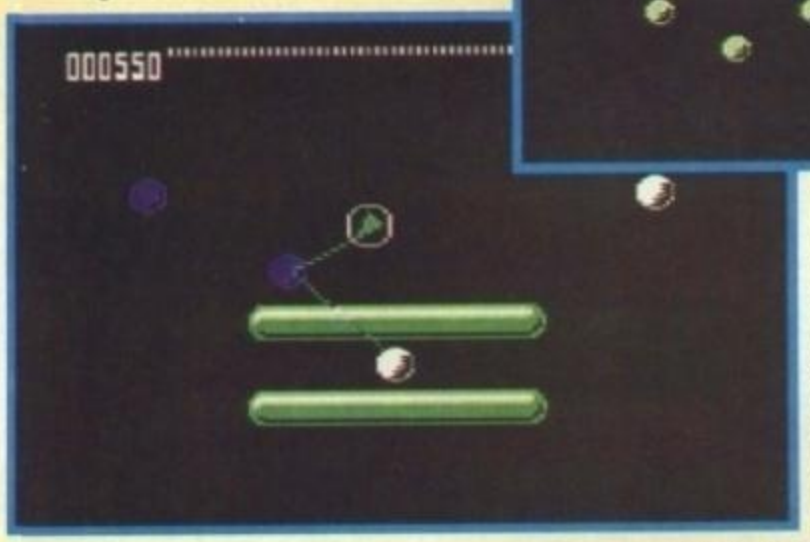


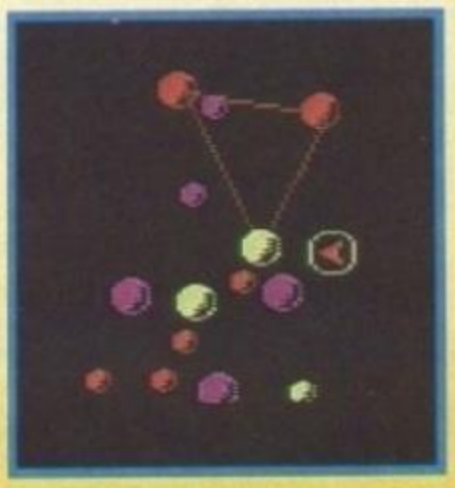
1. MAIN VIEW
The game world through the eyes of your current character.

Arcade? Puzzle? Strategy? we defy anyone to categorise *E-Motion*, but one thing we do know — it's sure got balls. It's incredibly simple, at least in concept. Each screen contains a number of different coloured spheres, the idea being to pilot a little circular ship around the screen knocking like coloured balls together causing them to disappear. Clear the screen and move on to the next. Simple? By jove no! Should two balls of different colours come together, a small pod is produced which can be collected for extra energy. Fail to collect it quickly enough however, and it expands to become another ball — double trouble! Then there's the time limit. Balls vibrate, slowly at first, but take too long on a screen and they explode draining energy. The faster they pulsate, the closer they are to critical mass. To make things tougher still, on some levels you'll find barriers, balls linked together with elastic, and sometimes even connected to your craft.

There's even a nice two player option for some good, old fashioned co-operation.

So don't think you're going to be able to sit down and play straight through this one — it's hard, and just feel that inertia.





DEALS ON REELS!

- Got a disk drive? Then how'd ya fancy a dollop of disks containing your monthly Reel Action doolallies? You would — then fill this in and send it to: Ablex Audio Video Ltd, Harcourt, Halesfield 14, Telford, Shropshire TF7 4QR.
- Be sure to include a PO for £1.49 and your disks'll be with you in the wink of a sesame seed bun.

Name .....
Address .....
.....
.....
.....
Reel Action Nos .....
Favourite Muldavian .....

CONTROLS

■ Control is by joystick or keyboard as follows:

Keys	Player 1	Player 2
Left	A	K
Right	S	L
Forward	Space	Return
Fire		X

MAYHEM IN MONSTERLAND — Playable Demo

Apex's gorgeous platform romp has had us clamouring for the '64 this month and, not wanting you to feel left out, here's a cut down section of level three to drool over. The actual level will be much bigger, and that's BIG. You start the game in 'sad' mode. The aim's to collect as many bags of magic dust as possible then enter the exit (!?) where you're greeted by a friendly dragon, before re-emerging into the now-happy land. Most nasties can be killed by leaping on their heads but watch out — you don't know where they might be hiding. Should you discover the 'lightning' power-up on the Happy stage, pressing fire while running at speed will make Mayhem charge. But enough of this banter, get on and play it and see why we're all so excited. Oh, and dig the amazing introductory sequences...

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ACTION

3. STATUS
Strength and fitness of character.

2. CHARACTER
Your selected team member.

4. AMMO
Number of rounds remaining in the selected character's weapon.

5. ROOM
The number of the room in which character is currently residing.

6. BIO-MONITOR BAR
Green means the character is okay, yellow he's (or she's) captured by aliens, red and he's (or, again, she's) impregnated — dead meat. The stamina bar shows how much energy's remaining. Movement requires energy so rest characters intermittently or they become exhausted and unable to move.

7. CREDIT POINTS
The potential reward for successful completion of your mission.

Beau Jolly

The game of the triff movie takes up the story just as a team of marines land in the alien-infested remains of an Earth colony, way off in deep space. You're in command and must direct your squad around the base from the relative safety of the Mobile Tactical Operations Bay (MTOB) in the personnel carrier that brought you here. You have six people at your disposal; Ripley, Gorman, Hicks, Bishop, Vasquez and Burke. To select a character press the key of their initial e.g. 'R' for Ripley except for Bishop who's selected with 'I'.

The main area of the screen represents a video image from a shoulder-mounted camera of the selected character. This means you see exactly what each character sees. A cross-hair gunsight is moved by the joystick. You can destroy various terminals as well as blasting through locked doors. To enter a door, position the sight over it and press space.

To direct a character to move independently through up to nine rooms, press a number between one and nine then a direction (N, S, E or W) then select someone else.

Pause the action by pressing 'P' and to restart tap 'P' twice. 'M' aborts the game.

ALIENS

● **Below — Uh oh! Looks like some one bit the big one. Game over man, game over!**

THE AIM

Your mission's to rid the complex of Alien vermin and maximise your credit points. Learn how to get your people working as team and things'll be a whole lot easier. Right, let's move out marines!

INIMITABLE INLAYS
Yikes! Don't expose those tapes — keep them warm and cosy with our cut-out continental quilts.

COMMODORE FORCE
E-MOTION
BY JOVE
MAYHEM IN MONSTERLAND
EASY LIVES
REEL ACTION #23
COMMODORE FORCE REEL ACTION #23
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ALIENS
ZOIDS
REEL ACTION #24
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CHEAP NIGHTS OUT IN BANGKOK

There's a definite eastern theme to this month's offer as we give you the chance to get Alternative's Last Ninja/Bangkok Knights two-in-one pack for two ponds off the recommended retail price. Obviously, having bought this issue, you'll already own a sparkling copy of The Last Ninja, but Bangkok Knights is so special, we reckon this offer's pretty darn excellent. Just send this coupon, along with £2.99 + 85p P & P to: Alternative Software Ltd, Units 5 — 7 Baileygate Ind Est, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 2LN.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Most satisfactory fruit .....

REEL ACTION #23

COMMODORE FORCE

E-MOTION
Infuriatingly addictive puzzle-cum-arcade action.

BY JOVE
Excellent reader adventure.

MAYHEM demo
Read the review? Then play the game — or at least a portion of it...

EASY LIVES
More load-'em-and-go pokes from Master Wells.

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS
Rewind tape, Hit PLAY and RUN/STOP simultaneously then let the games sooth your aching mind.

DODGY DUPLICATION
Tape's don't work, eh? No wormes — Pop 'em in an envelope addressed to: Ablex Audio Video Ltd, Harcourt, Halesfield 14, Telford, Shropshire TF7 4QD

TAPE INFO
E-MOTION 000
BY JOVE 000
MAYHEM DEMO 000
EASY LIVES 000

REEL ACTION #24

COMMODORE FORCE

ALIENS
Gosh grandmother! What big teeth you have!

ZOIDS
Visit a frightening new reality in the far flung future.

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS
Rewind tape, Hit PLAY and RUN/STOP simultaneously then let the games sooth your aching mind.

DODGY DUPLICATION
Tape's don't work, eh? No wormes — Pop 'em in an envelope addressed to: Ablex Audio Video Ltd, Harcourt, Halesfield 14, Telford, Shropshire TF7 4QD

TAPE INFO
ALIENS 000
ZOIDS 000

Remember those infernal toys? You could spend hours clipping together all the fiddly little bits before winding up the clockwork motor, only to find it didn't work — not all of us are mechanically-minded, after all. Oh the joys of childhood.

ZOIDS

ICONS

Your Zoid's manipulated by clicking on various icons using the joystick. The function of each is outlined below.

INFO BANK
Gives information on vehicles and buildings, allowing you to decide how best to fight them.

SENSORS
Tells you of incoming missiles so you can take evasive action.

RAIL GUN
Select this to arm your Zoid's pulse gun. When a target is selected, drag the moving sight into the centre and fire when it turns red.

MISSILES
To fire a missile, load it with an appropriate amount of fuel (joystick up) then guide it to its destination on the missile targeting screen.

JAMMING
Allows you to jam and divert incoming missiles.

STATUS
An inventory of items collected.

MANIPULATE
Use or drop items in your

Many years ago there lived a mighty race of warlords known as the Zoidarians. From their home planet of Zoidstar they conquered the galaxy by means of mighty fighting machines known as Zoids. Eventually they'd conquered every planet in range but the years of fighting had given them an insatiable appetite for violence. Inevitably Zoid turned against Zoid. It became apparent to the warlords that, what with all this violent squabbling, the extinction of their race was a very real possibility. To prevent this, androids were developed to pilot the Zoids into combat. These became so highly advanced they were soon able to take over the design and construction of new Zoids. The warlords now sat back and amused themselves watching the war of the mechanized masses. Unfortunately for them, a freak meteor storm wiped out all life on Zoidstar, leaving only machines. Without anyone to lead them, the struggles on Zoidstar became even more ferocious.

However, unbeknownst to the machines on Zoidstar, the warlords had kept a back-up force of Zoids aboard large transporters in space. During the storm they were forced to crash-land on one of Zoidstar's moons — an icy and barren satellite, with conditions to which Zoids were totally unsuited. To survive, the marooned Zoids were forced to unite and mutate, becoming Red Zoids. Under the leadership of the most powerful Red Zoid, Redhorn The Terrible, the Red Zoids returned to conquer Zoidstar.

To combat this mighty new threat, the warring 'Blue Zoids' joined forces and constructed Zoidzilla to be their leader. Caught by surprise however, the Blue Zoids were soon overrun.

A Blue Zoid patrol was... um, patrolling one day when they discovered a strange pod, it's occupant still alive. A humanoid from the distant planet of Earth, he proved to be a tough fighter and good strategist. Eventually a plan was formulated in which Earthman and Zoidzilla would be dropped in the heart of Red Zoid territory to seek out and destroy Redhorn. Without his leadership the reds would crumble.

Unfortunately during the descent, Earthman's ship was destroyed. He managed to escape but Zoidzilla was blown to pieces. These were quickly collected by Red Zoids and hidden in heavily defended city domes. Now you, as Earthman, must locate the eight pieces of Zoidzilla and rebuild him before taking on Redhorn.

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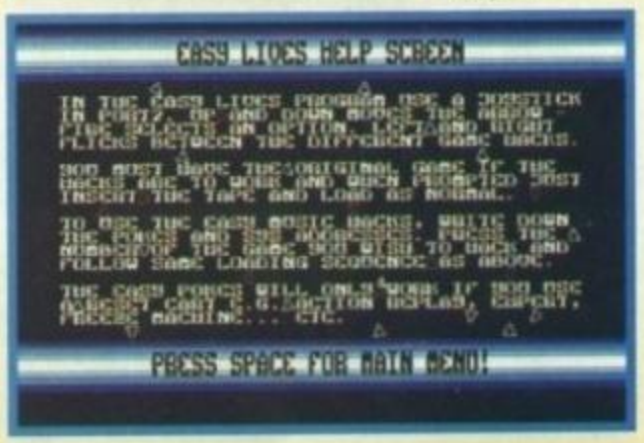
EASY LIVES

Jon Wells

Yup, it's Jon Wells again with another superb helping of load-'em-up hacks. This month, John's hacked... errm, Miles? What *did* Jon hack? You don't mean I've sent the disk off to be mastered at Ablex without writing down what Jon's included this month? But it's late at night! I can't possibly phone him now — he'll be tucked up in bed with his teddy bear! What am I going to write instead? I'll have to bluff. What? Write what I've just said? But that'd be a right cop-out? Quickly — I'll write it and hope the readers don't notice. After all, no-one reads the instructions (!) for Easy Lives, do they...?



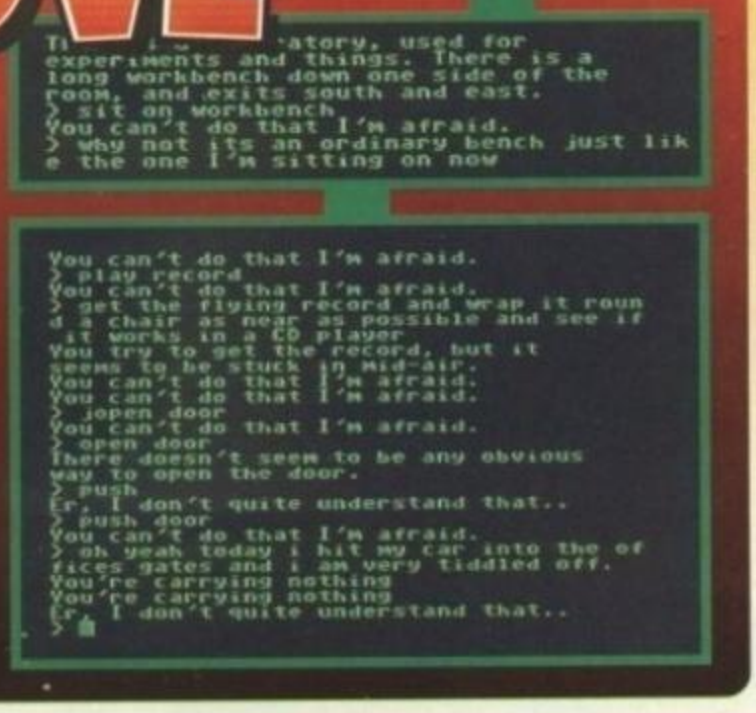
Fortunately the game's a different colander of asparagus — having received 97% and a ZZAP! Gold Medal Award in its time, we're confident you'll love it to little pieces...

You can't do that I'm afraid.
> play record
You can't do that I'm afraid.
> get the flying record and wrap it roun
d a chair as near as possible and see if
it works in a CD player
You try to get the record, but it
seems to be stuck in mid-air.
You can't do that I'm afraid.
You can't do that I'm afraid.
> jopen door
You can't do that I'm afraid.
> open door
There doesn't seem to be any obvious
way to open the door.
> push
Er, I don't quite understand that..
> push door
You can't do that I'm afraid.
> oh yeah today i hit my car into the of
fices gates and i am very tiddled off.
You're carrying nothing
You're carrying nothing
Er, I don't quite understand that..

BY JOVE

Neil Mallett

You asked for more adventures... well, you've got one! From the talented hands of COMMODORE FORCE reader Neil Mallett is this well-designed and executed textarama, unusually titled *By Jove*. Don't let the name put you off, though — it's by far the best reader adventure we've seen in a long time. It even manages to raise a snigger in places — and we've not said that about an adventure since Fergus McNeil's early adventures. So what are you waiting for? Load it up and see for yourself! The usual commands apply — north, south, get etc — and, should the demand be great enough, we'll print the solution in a future issue.


You can't do that I'm afraid.
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You can't do that I'm afraid.
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You can't do that I'm afraid.
> oh yeah today i hit my car into the of
fices gates and i am very tiddled off.
You're carrying nothing
You're carrying nothing
Er, I don't quite understand that..

CONTROLS

Click on the map screen and a window pops up. The blue square represents your Zoid, yellow markers are buildings and red ones are enemy Zoids. Clicking on a 'foreign' object brings up the targeting window for whichever weapon is currently selected. Clicking on the blue square goes into navigation mode. Rotate the white arrow with joystick left/right and fire to move off in that direction.

All actual game actions are controlled by joystick, with additional key functions as follows:

M.....Toggle between music and FX
P.....Pause
SPACE.....Restart
RESTORE.....Abort game and return to start

GET A PIECE OF THE ACTION

If you've written a game you reckon's *reel* good, why not share it with 64ers the world over. COMMODORE FORCE is read by countless thousands across the globe, and it's covertapes loaded by equally numerous people. To get you creation into the public eye fill in this form and send it 'A Piece Of The Action' at the usual address.

Name.....
Address.....
.....
Utility used (if any).....

IMPORTANT

Please sign this declaration;
This program is submitted for publication by COMMODORE FORCE. It is wholly my/our own work and I/we agree to indemnify Impact Magazines (UK) Ltd against any possible legal action should copyright problems arise. This game is not being considered for publication by any other magazine or software house, and I/we will let you know in writing in the event of this happening.

Signed..... **Date**.....

Include this form (or a photocopy) otherwise your program will not be considered. Also, due to the huge amounts of submissions we now have to deal with, we can no longer return cassettes, disks and the like. To minimise expenditure, don't send gold-plated cassette boxes — it's a waste of money.

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BACK TO THE PART FIVE.

The year 1989 was a big year for C64 software, and no mistake. The quality of most releases was generally very high, a few real classics made their way onto the shelves, and the word 'licensed' meant more to the software industry than it ever had before. Come to think of it, a mystery prize is available to the first person who can tell us how many times I've had to use the words 'licensed', 'coin-op' or 'conversion' throughout this feature. Answers on a postcard to the usual address please...

Despite predictions that the C64 was on its way out, 1989 saw booming trade in both licensed and original software. Conversions — previously a very hit-and-miss affair — were increasing in both quantity and quality. **Imageworks**' C64 version of the moderately popular *Blasteroids* coin-op was a more-than-adequate rendition, but, like so many of its kind, lacked the 'oomph' you expect from a computer game. An update of the classic *Asteroids* (hence the name), it offered two-player action and collectables, as well as the traditional rock-pulping, screen-spinning gameplay. But could it be described as a good-value buy at full price? Most arcade machines can tempt a few coins from

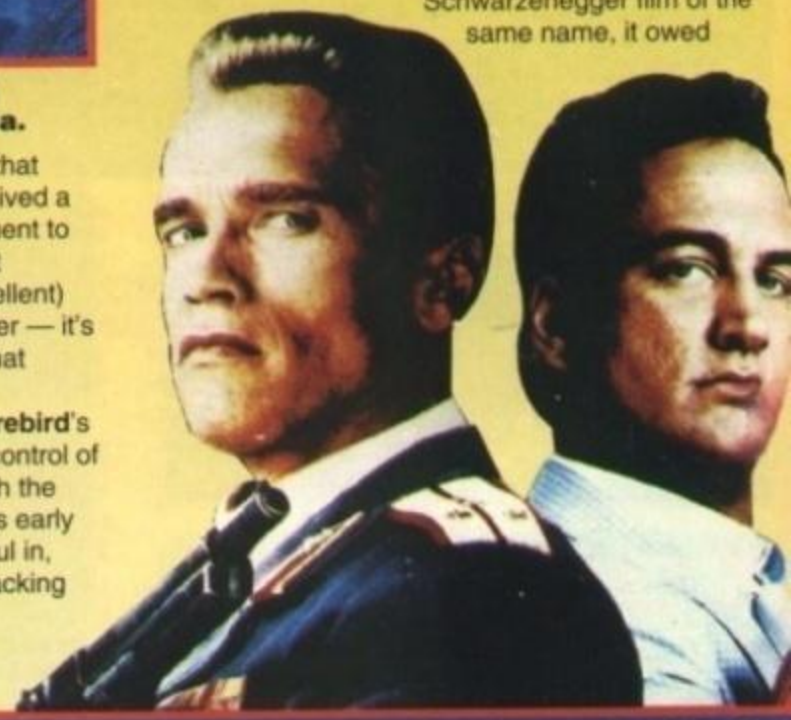
● **Blasteroids — Fun but ultimately limited update of an age-old formula.**

individuals' pockets, but there aren't many that entice nine pounds' worth. *Blasteroids* received a favourable 83% rating from ZZAP! subsequent to its release, and narrowly squeezed into last month's Top 100 due to its (admittedly excellent) two-player option. I'd have rated it a lot lower — it's ideal budget fodder, but there's really not that much to it. Not for £8.99, anyway...

From the well-meant to the ridiculous, **Firebird**'s *Dynamic Duo* stank. Badly. Putting you in control of a bird and a dwarf in two playing areas (with the screen split horizontally to make these), this early attempt at using the technique so successful in, say, *Lotus*, was an unmitigated disaster. Lacking any real gameplay, it was condemned by horrified reviewers and, I trust, consumers alike. Why on earth **Firebird** actually released it is beyond us, but most surprisingly of all is that it was released in a year that saw **Ocean** bring us the classic *Rainbow Islands* and *New Zealand Story*, among others.

Winning Streak

As far as C64 software's concerned, 1989 was **Ocean**'s best-ever year, with only a few 'hiccups' — *Rambo 3* and *Red Heat*. *Rambo 3* was a mixture of gamestyles, including a *Gauntlet*-style runaround and an *Operation Wolf*-type shoot-'em-up section. *The plan-view areas were overly tedious, and the absence of any level codes meant that getting to the mildly-addictive blasting level was hard going. All in all, it was a very average outing — unlike the diabolical Red Heat.* A tie-in with the Schwarzenegger film of the same name, it owed



Blasteroids	**Imageworks**	**83%**	**70%**	**4/10**
Irrindespensible as a two-player game, somewhat lacking otherwise.				
Dynamic Duo	**Firebird**	**19%**	**8%**	**4/10**
PPerhaps it was a joke and we didn't get it?				
New Zealand Story	**Ocean**	**93%**	**93%**	**3/10**
AA marvelous conversion. Yummy.				
Rainbow Islands	**Ocean**	**92%**	**97%**	**7/10**
AA classic. Possibly the best conversion ever.				
Red Heat	**Ocean**	**65%**	**27%**	**1/10**
NNot one of Ocean's finer releases.				
Altered Beast	**Activision**	**73%**	**62%**	**4/10**
ODkay conversion of a mediocre coin-op.				

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FEATURE 1989

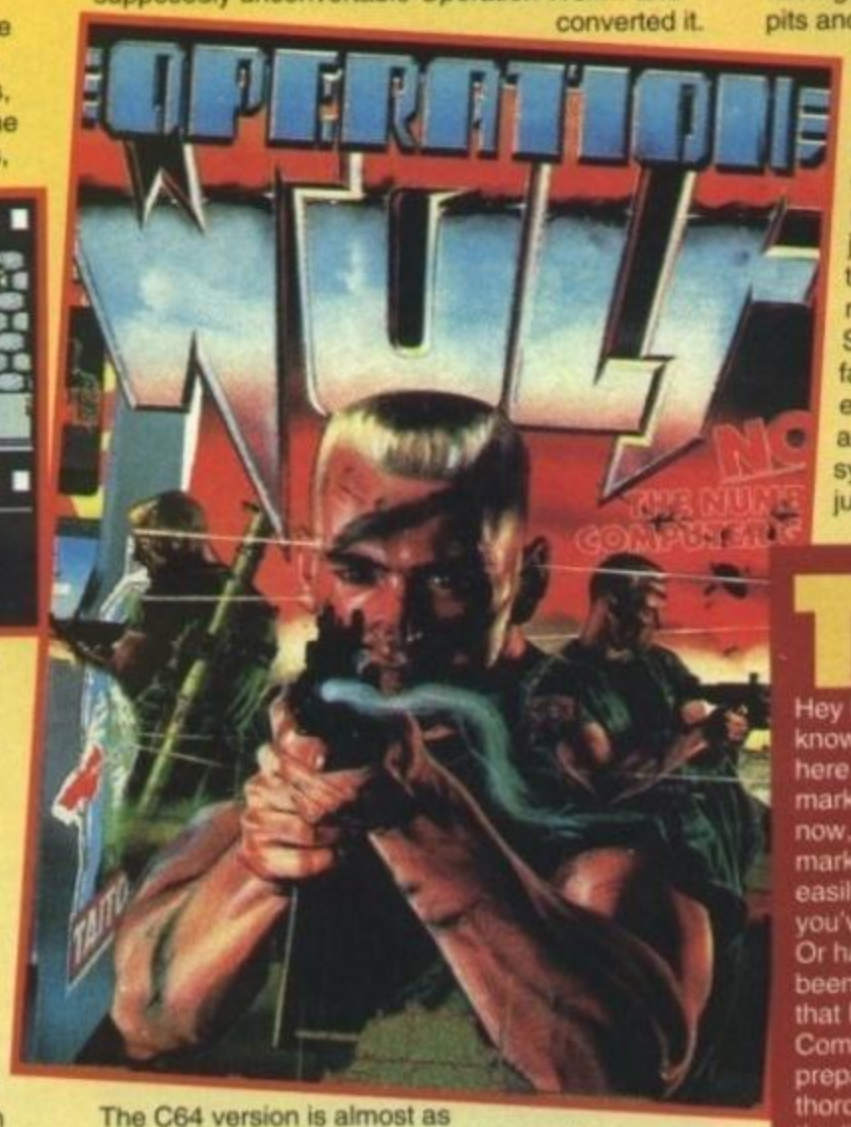
morethan a passing nod to *Kung Fu Master*, the ancient beat-'em-up. Its main original point was that to accommodate the large size of its sprites, the bottom half of their bodies were missing. The resuling wide-screen film-reel-type display was,

● A dire movie tie-in, Red Heat caught the film's spirit unwittingly well.

though graphically competent, devoid of any gameplay. Move, duck, punch... and embrace the tedium, baby. If I remember rightly, it was programmed by Special FX — the otherwise excelent development house responsible for classics such as *Midnight Resistance*. Oh well — I suppose everyone has their bad days...

On an altogether more positive note, *Rainbow Islands* turned out to be the most utterly, utterly brilliant coin-op conversion ever. Converted by the multi-talented Graftgold team, it was proof indeed that the C64 could, to a certain extent, compete with the Amiga — its rendition was almost as good as its 16-bit counterpart. Even the chirpy-cheerful souped-up version of 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow' that accompanied the action was excellent. Arriving in the same month as *Islands* was the absolutely superb but-not-quite-as-good-as-*RI* licence, *New Zealand Story*. It too was sickeningly cute, and with a plethora of fluffy kiwis to boot.

On a more violent note, **Ocean** took the supposedly unconvertable *Operation Wolf*... and converted it.



The C64 version is almost as good as it could have been, lacking only the cabinet-mounted guns that made the original such a hit. *Renegade 3* was also released, bringing the *Renegade* series to an end in a functional manner. Whereas its predecessors had been all-out beat-'em-ups, *Renegade 3 — The Final Chapter* (to give it its full title) tried to go one further by adding jumping across spike pits and the like. Bad move. Even worse was the ridiculous array of enemies — dinosaurs, cavemen, egyptian mummies and knights on hobby horses, among others. To round it all off, the entire game structure was supposedly justified by the addition of a laughable time-travel plot, which, on account of its most dire nature, I won't relate here. Suffice to say, these elements did few favours to the actual game. It played well enough, but with the lack of any *real* action and the one-move-kills-all syndrome present and accounted for, it just wasn't full-price material.

The List!

Hey hey hey, it's the ratings and stuff. You must know how it works by now, but just in case, here goes: Game Name, Publisher, Original mark received, COMMODORE FORCE rating now, availability. The availability mark is marked out of ten, with ten meaning the game's easily found and bought, and one signifying you've got next to no chance of finding it, pal. Or have you? This availability business has been a controversial one of late, as it turns out that I'm almost always wrong in my predictions. Common sense dictates that, if I'm not prepared (or able) to research each mark thoroughly, perhaps it'd be wiser to omit it from the list. Well, indeed it would, but what would you have to moan about if I were to — apart from consoles, lack of software, consoles, lack of sof...

Myth — Original, absorbing and utterly gorgeous to look at.	System 3	94%	94%	4/10
Cabal — Not ground-breaking, but very playable nonetheless.	Ocean	89%	80%	2/10
Stunt Car Racer — Brilliant use of vector graphics, even better gameplay.	Microstyle	94%	95%	5/10
Batman: The Movie — Excellent tie-in with novel twists.	Ocean	96%	90%	4/10
Renegade 3 — Over-rated at the time — not a patch on its predecessors.	Ocean	90%	56%	1/10
Silkworm — Great fun — even better with two players.	The Sales Curve	91%	80%	4/10

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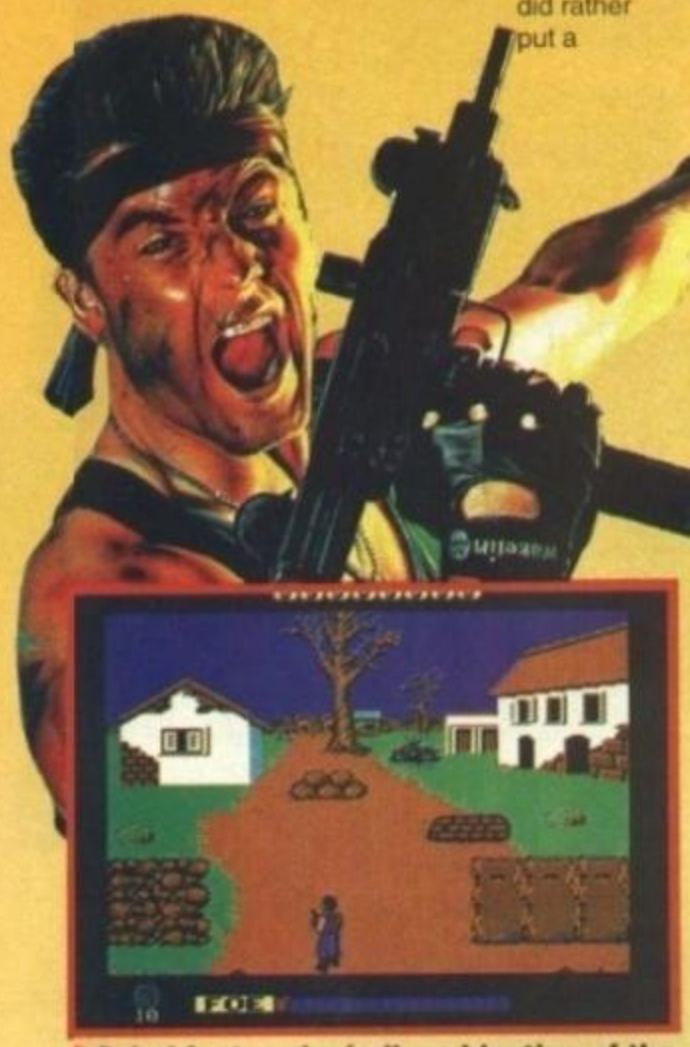
Like *Operation Wolf* viewed and played from a different perspective, *Cabal* wasn't the most successful arcade machine ever. It did make for frenetic C64 shoot-'em-up action, though, as players blasted their way through many single but very destructible screens. It was perhaps this ability to wipe out the scenery as well as your assailants that was *Cabal*'s true charm. A multiload did rather put a dampener on proceedings, but the disk version, lacking that problem, was very good.



Cabal featured mindless blasting of the highest order. Chunky, macho and fun.

Rounding off **Ocean**'s 1989 efforts were the film tie-ins *The Untouchables* and *Batman: The Movie*. *The Untouchables* was a late licence; the release of the game didn't catch the movie's critical (if not necessarily box-office) success. Nonetheless, its strength of design and playability were second to none — **Ocean**'s previous multi-section licences paled in comparison. With *Operation Wolf*-type (but better) sections, platform levels and much more, it was a delight to play as well as behold — it even followed the film's plot to a certain extent. Not quite as good but equally well received was Batman: The Movie — again, a multi-section licence. Its best levels were platform-based, where Batman could be moved around using a unique 'rope' utility attached to his belt. Swinging from floor to floor was great fun, not to mention well executed. I've always felt it didn't flow as well as its less colourful Spectrum counterpart, but I'd better not go on about that, should I...

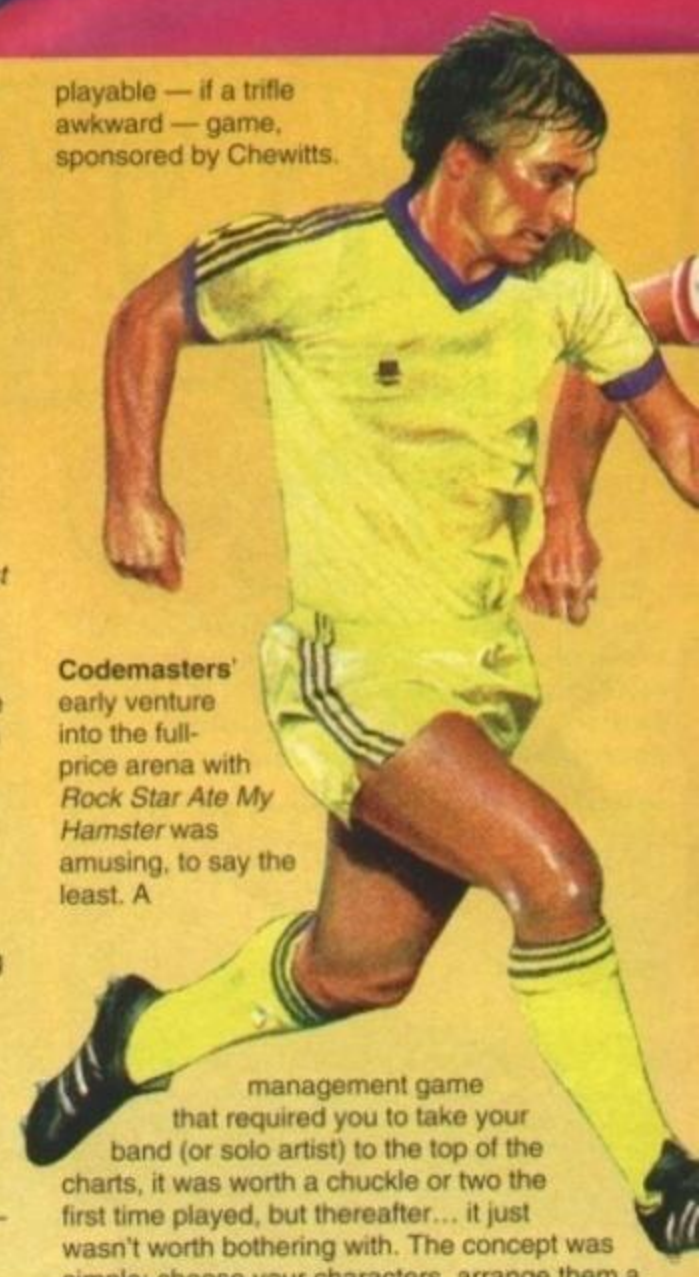
And of the rest...

As I've already mentioned, arcade conversions are usually substandard for one of three reasons — the conversion is beyond the machine's capabilities, such as *Hard Drivin'*, the coding's naff like *Cisco Heat*, or the original game wasn't up to much — *Altered Beast* being a classic example of this. A horizontally-scrolling beat-'em-up with very little beat, its main novelties were its two-player option and 'character changing'. By collecting three power-ups, the sprite would become a monster of some description, with each level providing a different one. Problem was, the tedium soon set in — with only a few moves and one level of play, each level was a little too similar to the last. Oh, it had a multiload too...

It may seem like all of 1989's memorable moments were conversions, but a few original gems did appear; **System 3**'s *Myth* was something else. With graphics that wouldn't look too out of place on a 16-bit machine, it took the basic platform game ideal and did wonders with it. Fighting demons, solving puzzles... it had it all. It also lacked the bugs that haunted its Amiga counterpart...

With, I'm sure, countless numbers of Godzilla movies in mind, **Gremlin** released *The Muncher* — a graphically-sound smash-'em-up where the player controlled a large Godzilla-type monster. Playing like a multidirectionally-scrolling *Rampage*, *The Muncher* combined big, bold graphics with large scale destruction. The result? A highly playable — if a trifle awkward — game, sponsored by Chewitts.

With perhaps the biggest sprite in C64 history, Muncher was truly monsterous.



Codemasters' early venture into the full-price arena with *Rock Star Ate My Hamster* was amusing, to say the least. A management game that required you to take your band (or solo artist) to the top of the charts, it was worth a chuckle or two the first time played, but thereafter... it just wasn't worth bothering with. The concept was simple; choose your characters, arrange them a few gigs, record a single, record an album. Once heard a few times, the tunes that accompanied this 'action' soon began to grate. Why **Codemasters** released it on their premier range label (**Codemasters Gold**, no less) is beyond me; suffice to say, it wasn't long before it was re-released at £3.99.

Mastertronic, no longer the budget giants they had been, re-released *Manic Miner*. A curious move, it scored highly with reviewers (95%, ZZAP! 64) if not buyers — while it will always be considered a classic by those caught by the computer bug in the early eighties, I doubt it enjoyed an astounding retail success. Did you know that it's actually a rip-off of an old Atari game, *Miner 2029er*? Well it is.

From the basic to the technically superb, **Microstyle**'s *Stunt Car Racer* was a marvellous example of programming expertise. Most race

The Untouchables Superb film, superb game.	Ocean	96%	94%	3/10
Shinobi Great conversion of the uninspired-but-addictive coin-op.	Virgin	86%	80%	2/10
APB Playable but flawed.	Domark	90%	76%	3/10
Xybots A disaster. Horrible.	Domark	27%	17%	2/10
The Muncher Great fun, but infuriating at times.	Gremlin	71%	70%	2/10
Manic Miner Nostalgia suggests 95%. Reality insists 46%. Hmmm...	Mastertronic	95%	46%	1/10

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games tend to provide the player with boring, thrill-free tracks; *Stunt Car Racer*'s many courses owed more to roller coasters than Formula One, and to great effect. Its wireframe graphics were both smooth and fast — supposedly, vector graphics aren't the C64's strong suit, but *Racer* proved they could be done, and done well.

Microstyle's parent company, **Microprose** (remember them?) also delivered a classic piece of C64 software in the form of *Microprose Soccer* — heard of it? For those who are interested, we should be holding the challenge next issue...

Domark's marketing

The evergreen Microprose soccer included a novel indoor game as a bonus.

deal with **Tengen** hit both high and low points during the year. Their conversion of the classic *Xybots* coin-op left a lot to be desired — a poor quality Spectrum port, it lacked speed, colour and playability. The actual gameplay was so simple, it was unique: run around a maze searching for the exit, blasting various nasties and, if you so wished, have a friend join in for simultaneous split-screen action. However, everything was displayed in semi first-person 3D. The graphics were (or so I'm told) sprite- as opposed to wireframe-based (thus limiting the smoothness of movement), but the basic idea — and certainly the original coin-op's execution of it — were sound. It's just a shame a little more time wasn't spent on making the

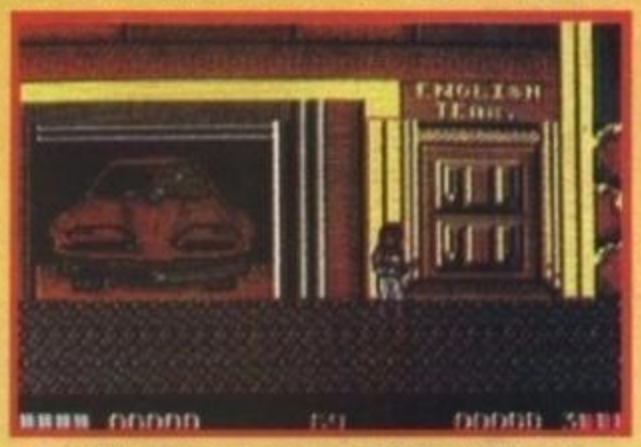
Poor programming doomed Xybots to reside in the 'what might have been' file.

conversion worthwhile...

Following *Xybots* but managing to retain a great deal of its subject matter's charm was *APB*. This multidirectionally-scrolling plan-view car chase game was a huge success in the arcades, where its compulsive gameplay and humorous touches had endeared it to arcade goers. The conversion was far from perfect — the occasional bug reared its ugly head and the graphics *were* a little basic — but it was such an enjoyable concept that such drawbacks were easily ignored. It also lacked the Spectrum version's tendency to crash every two games — a benefit and a half, if you ask me.

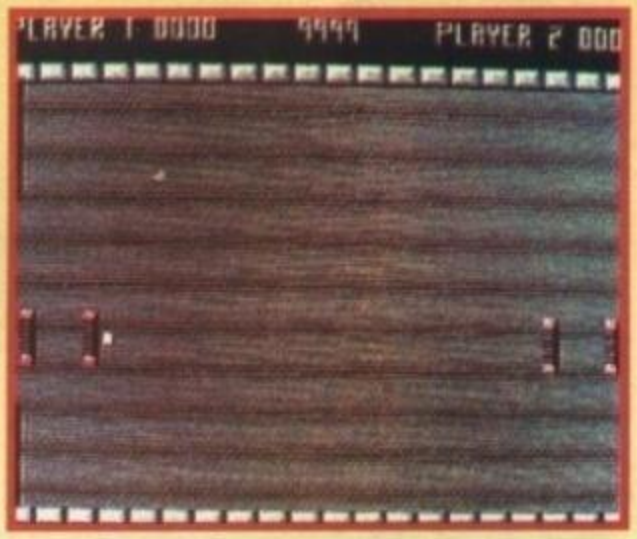
One of **Domark**'s other conversions was *Return of the Jedi* — a conversion of the coin-op of the film. The third (and so far last) in the *Star Wars* trilogy, the film lacked the oomph of its predecessors; a problem suffered equally by its arcade counterpart. Whereas *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes* Back had been wireframe-based shoot-'em-ups, *Jedi* was a *Zaxxon*-inspired diagonally-scrolling blaster. This little-used perspective has rarely been utilised in games of any value or consequence — even the otherwise-excellent Costa Panyi failed to do wonders with it in his *Highway/Alien Encounter* games. As you'd expect, the conversion was flawed from the start — if there's not much in the original, how can a home computer version ever be anything more than mediocre? Oh, one more thing, fact fans. Did you know that David Lynch — of *Blue Velvet* and *Twin Peaks* fame — was originally asked to direct the *Return of the Jedi* film, an offer he refused? Just imagine what it would have been like if he'd said yes...

From **Melbourne House** came the sorry conversion of the excellent *Double Dragon* arcade machine. The original is, in my opinion, one of the best coin-ops ever released; its simple but brutal gameplay and great two-player option worth almost every ten pee put into its coin-slot. Unfortunately, the C64 version left a lot to be desired: awful graphics, terrible collision detection... you name a flaw, it's almost assured that '64 *Dragon* had it. I suppose you could take solace from the fact that versions on other computer formats were just as dodgy, but not much. I'm just glad I didn't buy it myself. Speaking of which, *Blip — Video Classics* was a **Silverbird** release that crossed the fine line



Double Dragon was solid beat-'em-up action all the way, unlike the conversion.

from novel to ridiculous, and suffered accordingly. Remember the early consoles, with the *Pong*-orientated arcade games? Can you recall how imaginations were called upon to think of four thin rectangles and a bouncing ball as a football match or tennis tournament? Well *Blip* took those early... I can't call them classics — I mean, they were a bit on the dire side, even back then... 'novelties', and totally failed to update them in any real way. It simply duplicated them. The end result, far from astounding or revolutionary, was another budget game that nobody really bought.



Blip Video Classics — A pointless batch of extinct arcade dinosaurs.

Pacmania Overpriced but playable.	**Grandslam**	**88%**	**56%**	**2/10**
Operation Wolf Shoot-'em-up fun, but not the same without the cabinet-mounted guns...	**Ocean**	**91%**	**79%**	**2/10**
Thunderblade Okay conversion of impossible-to-convert coin-op.	**US Gold**	**69%**	**65%**	**2/10**
Exploding Fist + Vastly inferior to IK+.	**Firebird**	**68%**	**60%**	**1/10**
Double Dragon Dire.	**Melbourne House**	**15%**	**6%**	**1/10**
Return of the Jedi Average conversion of an average coin-op.	**Domark**	**61%**	**51%**	**2/10**

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Following Archer Maclean's superlative *IK+* (but not closely enough to make a real impression) was the similarly-named *Exploding Fist +*. It, like the aforementioned classic, added an extra player, a few more moves than its predecessor... to no great effect. *IK+* is the best beat-'em-up the C64 has ever seen, and I can confidently say that it won't ever be surpassed. *EF+* was a sorry cash-in attempt that utterly failed to impress me. Can I really say any more than that? Probably. But I've pretty much run out of spacefor this month...

It takes two...

The Sales Curve's conversion of the *Silkworm* coin-op was, astonishingly, more playable than the original. A horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up, it had a simultaneous two-player option where one joystick-weilder controlled an airborne helicopter, the other a ground-based jeep. Co-operation between players was essential for survival; each vehicle had weaknesses that the other could compensate for, so there was a little more to playing *Silkworm* than simply blasting away. However, its single-player mode was no less enjoyable — choosing between either the jeep or the helicopter, the lack of any assistance made for more challenging gameplay. I played *Silkworm* in the arcades once, and wasn't overly impressed with it — the C64 version seems far superior. How many times do you hear *that* said?

● **Silkworm gained huge popularity before losing its SEU crown to SWIV.**

A new dimension

Pac Man, eh? One of the first arcade machines, it was revolutionary at the time but these days... well, let's just say most people wouldn't waste their money on it. However, if a company were to take the bare bones of the game and change the basic cosmetics, would it make it any more playable? If they were to change the perspective to isometric 3D, increase the size of the graphics and make the maze scroll, would that make it a better game? Well marginally, yes. **Grandslam**'s conversion of *Pacmania* duplicated its subject matter well, and *was* fairly playable. It would have made better budget material, but I suppose that's asking for too much...

● **Pacmania — a valient attempt to update the classic maze game.**

Mission impossible

Thunderblade was an impressive coin-op. Mixing into-the-screen flight sections and vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up levels, it looked, sounded and played well. It's not hard to understand why people were so sceptical when **US Gold** announced they were converting it. Trying to fit Megabytes of graphical data into 64k is the sort of task that would give your average programmer nightmares — but, to be fair to them, **US Gold** and their developers gave it their best shot. The result? A moderately playable blast ruined on tape format by the obviously huge amounts of loading. The disk version was better, but even that was slow...

And so ends another totally thrilling instalment. Instead of sending availability queries to Lloyd, mark them 'James you prannet, you're quite wrong' and send them to the usual address. Apart from that, it's goodbye for this month...

Microprose Soccer A most excellent soccer game.	Microprose	90%	90%	6/10
Rambo 3 Dodgy tie-in with the laughable film. Awful.	Ocean	47%	32%	1/10
Blip — Video Whatever were they thinking of?	Classics Silverbird	15%	9%	1/10
Rock Star Ate My Hamster Great fun, but infuriating at times.	Codemasters Gold	50%	35%	1/10

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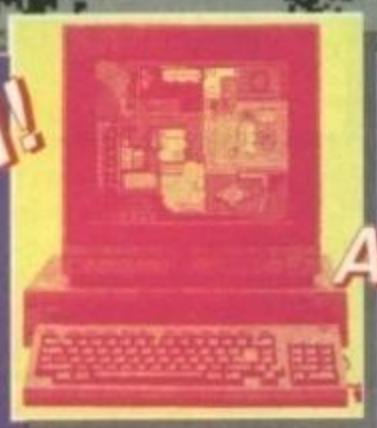

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COMMODORE FORCE HURRICANE HIT!

MAYHEM IN M

● Apex, £8.99 Cassette, £9.99 Disk

Mayhem in Monsterland? Never heard of it. Does it have anything to do with hedgehogs? Is it a film conversion? Jeez, you'll probably tell me next it's an ultra-slick platform game from the capable hands Creatures 1 and 2 creators, Apex! As if I, JAMES 'SUPER SPIN ATTACK' PRICE would believe that for a second. Hang on, though...

Platform games. Love them or hate them, they're as much a part of computer entertainment as, say, the computers (or consoles) themselves. They're so popular, in fact, that the two biggest companies in the video entertainment industry use them as strong selling points — game of Sonic or Mario, anyone? The efforts of various companies to hype their latest (platform) game as a hedgehog- or plumber-beater would suggest that there's a little more to the genre than simply jumping on assorted heads. People want to buy these games. This makes them profitable. Flight sims? Nah. Too complicated. What everyone needs is a simple platform game to vegetate with, right? Apparently so. The programmers keep on programming them, while the punters keep paying. Up until now, the only *really* decent platform games I've bothered with have been *Sonic* (sad but true) and Titus' excellent *The Blues Brothers*. Now there's *Mayhem*.

Mayhem's a horizontally-scrolling platform game. It has five main levels, made up of two different states — happy and sad. Complete the Sad area, and you move onto the Happy section. Finish that, and Mayhem progresses to the next 'World'. In Sad areas, Mayhem has to collect an allocated amount of magic dust, before making his way to the exit. The bags containing it can be found subsequent to the despatching of certain nasties. In Happy sections, Mayhem has to collect X amount of stars to progress to the next world. To kill monsters, Mayhem can either jump on their heads or, should he have found the lightning power-up, build up speed and charge through them. All it not that simple, though — later levels introduce creatures with spiked backs, heads and the like. To kill these, Mayhem has to hit a soft point — should he hit the spikes, either energy or a life is lost. Monsters with shells also present a problem — although they're not fatal, should Mayhem charge into them he's bounced backwards. Again, soft points have to be attacked...

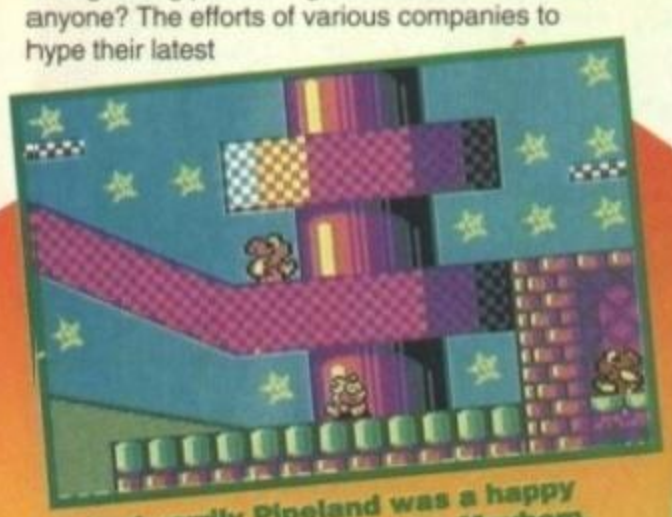
"The best-looking C64 game ever"

Mayhem, star of the game and all-round cutesy hero. His charge attack is something else — he moves at such an astounding rate, you'll thinkyou've got an Amiga.

The faster these stars rotate, the more points they're worth. Some of them are reet tricky to reach, too.

Downward pull

Mayhem also has to contend with forces such as gravity and inertia. Obviously, when he jumps he returns to ground pretty quickly, but the bigger his run-up, the larger the leap.



● And verrily Pipeland was a happy place once more — thanks Mayhem.

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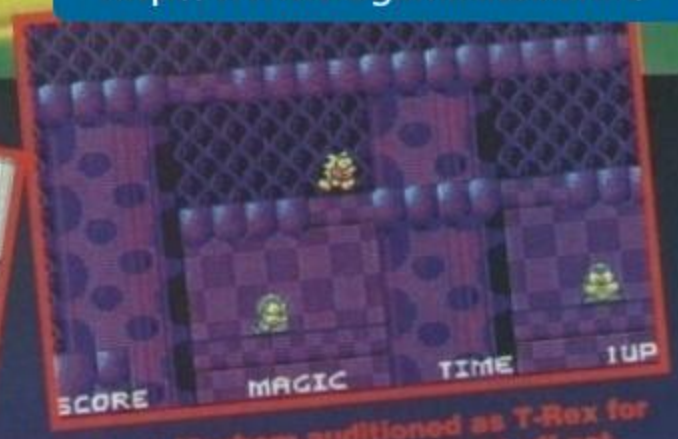


● Fact: Mayhem auditioned as T-Rex for Jurassic Park and got laughed off set.

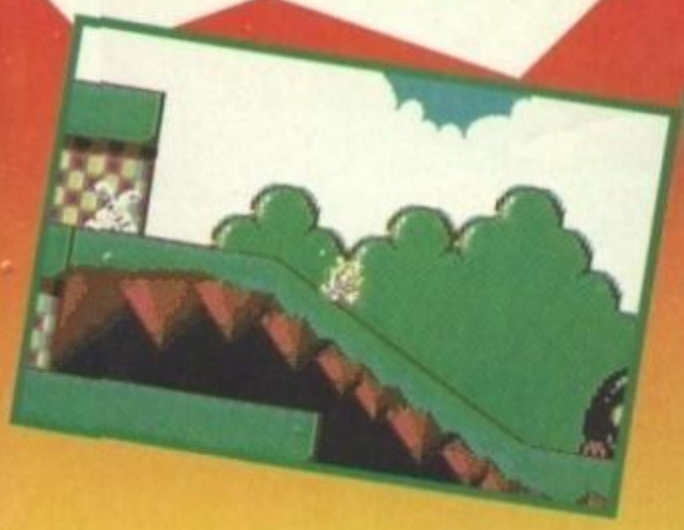
MONSTERLAND

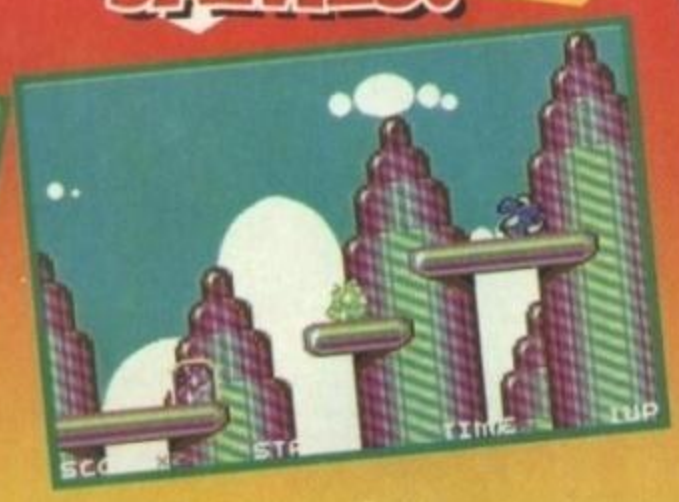
A monster. A squat one perhaps, but he's nasty nonetheless. A few jumps on his head should do the trick...

Similarly, the longer he runs, the faster he is, until he reaches top speed — which, in Charge mode, is very very fast indeed. Not surprisingly, the quicker he travels, the longer he skids during an emergency (or intentional) stop. Water, predictably, slows our hero's movement. While submerged, Mayhem is less nippy and reacts at a more pedestrian pace, while waterfalls simply speed up his descent after a jump.

Graphically, *Mayhem in Monsterland*'s superb. From the veritable rainbows of colour in the happy levels, to the oppressive darkness of the sad, it's probably the best-looking C64 game ever. The only game I can really compare it to in terms of cosmetics is *Creatures 2*. Like that previous Rowland production, the presentation is excellent. Before each level, an animated piece of scenery with countless layers of parallax adorns the centre of the screen, with animated text telling which level's about to be played, and what state it's in... ahh, what's the point. I'm about five hundred words into this review, and I feel as if I've hardly scratched the surface of what *Mayhem* has to offer. It's well-presented, playable to extremes, great to look at and listen to — I really can't fault it. There's even countless amounts of hidden extras (including elusive continues) to search out and claim; completing it wouldn't be seeing all it has to offer. It's utterly frustrating in places, consistently difficult and possibly the most challenging platform games I've ever encountered. Buy it.

JAMES! 98%





MILES!

● The *Creatures* boys have done the impossible and actually managed to surpass their previous games with *Mayhem*. From the tops of its jelly mountains to the tips of its cute little toes, this is a gamer's dream. Marvellously drawn sprites, especially Mayhem himself, trot about to perfectly smooth scrolling and the difficulty curves in a way that would make Claudia Scheiffer red with envy. There's a definite hint of *Mario* about it but *Mario* never was never this cool — come to think of it, simple collect-'em-up gameplay has rarely hit the mark so precisely either. This is THE platform game the 64's been waiting for, though it's hard to describe in words how truly wonderful it is. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and once you've had a taste you'll be pigging out for weeks. Sonic who?

96%

GALE WARNING

PRESENTATION	SUPERB. ARE YOU SURE THIS IS A C64?	92%
GRAPHICS	THE BEST C64 GRAPHICS WE'VE SEEN	97%
SOUND	BRILLIANT. MUSIC ALSO CHANGES WITH GAMEPLAY	92%
HOOKABILITY	UTTERLY, UTTERLY ADDICTIVE	97%
LASTABILITY	SO MUCH TO DO, ONLY ONE MAYHEM...	97%

FORCE FACTOR 97%

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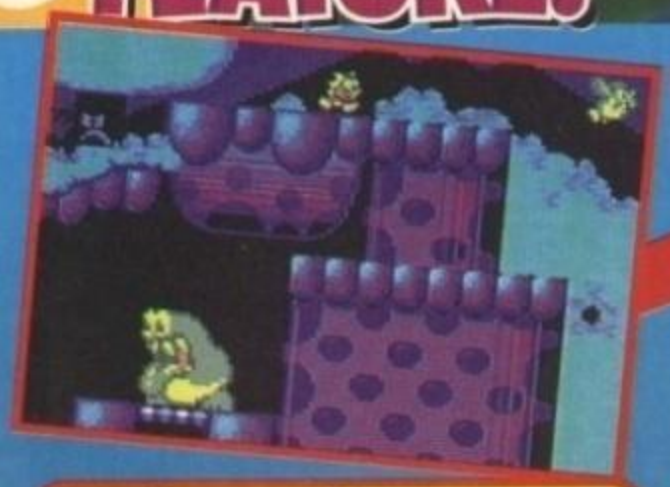
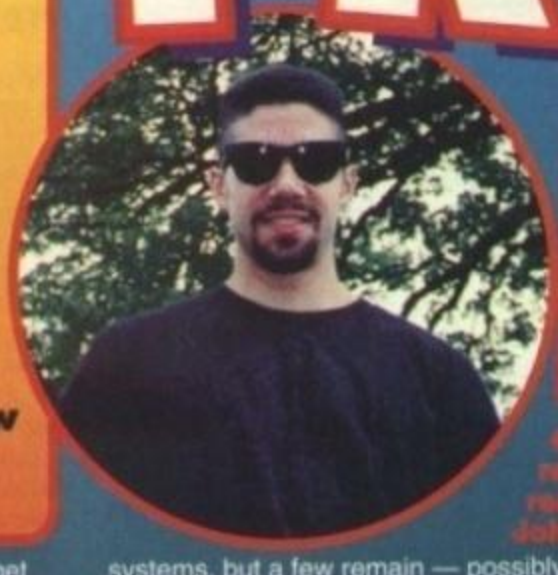


PROGRA MAY

So who are these Rowland boys then? Having just put the finishing touches to their latest epic — Mayhem in Monsterland — they're currently drinking themselves silly in celebration. Bearing in mind their exemplary track record, we decided it was time for an interview. After supplying ample amounts of coffee, we managed to obtain a few words of wisdom from the talented twosome...



● Carol, our receptionist, really fancies John. It's true.

These days, programmers don't seem to get as much publicity as they used to do. Take, for example, *Sonic the Hedgehog* — its huge team of developers are virtually unknown to all but those who see Sonic's ending sequence. Long-term C64 owners will remember the days when coders such as Andrew Braybrook and teams like The Oliver Twins appeared on magazine pages. These days, it seems as if programmers are people who write things for computers, while console carts... hey, plug 'em in, play 'em and bandage yer bleeding wallet, yes? Elevating programmers to minor celebrity status apparently isn't the done thing these days; the developing of powerful brand names is. With that, the silicon-based entertainment industry becomes more mainstream and loses its previous naive charm, but it's profitable, at least...

Most C64 programmers have already departed the Commodore scene to work with assorted 16-bit systems, but a few remain — possibly the most well-known of these being the Rowland Brothers. John and Steve Rowland are responsible for two of the biggest and well-programmed C64 games ever — namely *Creatures* and *Creatures 2*, as if you didn't know — and have just put the finishing touches to *Mayhem in Monsterland*, their latest platform epic. But why, when so many are now working on the 16- and 32-bits, are they still with the C64? And why did they choose the C64 in the first place?

● Creatures 2 contains some of the best graphics ever seen on an 8-bit system.

'We first got a C64 as a present, about 10 years ago,' explains John. 'From the first day we had it, we were creating programs on it. Granted, they were very bad programs, but you've got to start somewhere. We learnt Basic, then Machine Code and thought we could do better better games — if not, as good — as the ones being released at that time.'

That they did, and to much critical acclaim. 'We've designed and programmed *Cyberdyne Warrior*, *Retrograde*, *Creatures*, *Creatures 2* and *Mayhem in Monsterland*,' says John. 'Before *Cyberdyne Warrior*, we were involved in a game called *Scorpius*. We didn't program it, but we designed and produced the graphics and sound for it.' Whatever way you look at it, it's an impressive track record — many COMMODORE FORCE readers feel the *Creatures* games to be the best C64 products ever. But what inspired them?

'The main reason for programming a cute platform game was that we were sick of programming serious 'eat-laser-death-scum' games — something we'd done for the previous two years.' reveals John. 'Also, at that time, there wasn't the abundance of cutesy platformers as there is now. The arcade games we were playing at the time also influenced the design of *Creatures* — *Mr Wardner* ring any bells?'

Creature Comforts

But what about the infamous, bloodthirsty torture screens? Who came up with the idea for them? 'As with most of the ideas for our games, we both did!' explains Steve. 'We get a group of us around a table with some food and gargantuan amounts of

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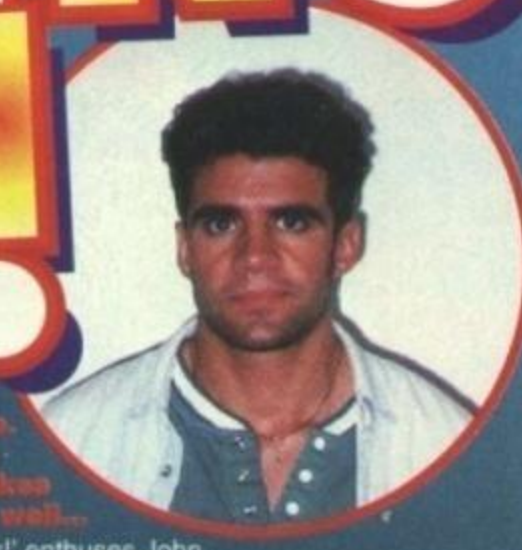
AMMING HEM!

● Mayhem, potential saviour of Monsterland, and creation of the Rowland boys. Hurrah!



● Steve. We bet Carol likes him as well...

beer and simply bounce ideas off each other — and beer cans, come to think of it!' On a wiser note, he continues: 'It's always better to have a reaction — or even better, an improvement — to an idea before it goes into a game.' As John and Steve are potentially such a hard-drinking bad influence, what would *Creatures* 1 and 2 hero Clyde Radcliffe drink if he were real? 'He'd live on a strict diet of extra strength beer and cider — as we seem to do — but only when he wasn't driving.

● Creatures 2 also includes some of the sickest scenes found in an 8-bit game.

okay kids!' enthuses John.

Hmmm. From the potentially inebriated to the cheeky, we enquired as to whether or not *Creatures* had made the Rowlands rich, to which John retorted: 'No — but it should have done! Basically, they (Thalamus, we assume — Ed) sold a massive amount of units, made a load of cash, but — due to circumstances beyond our control — we only received a small fraction of it (sob!).' A sorry tale indeed — but at least it brought the Rowlands

● Smiling trees, lush green vegetation — Mayhem triumphs again. Yippee!

fame within C64 circles. In fact, many COMMODORE FORCE readers feel Clyde Radcliffe to be the C64's equivalent Sonic or Mario — a flagship character, if you like. John's seems flattered by this, and replies: 'Obviously, we're very pleased that *Creatures 1* and *2* are seen this way, as we put a lot of time and effort into them.'. Blushing aside, John finds the time to make a shameless boast. 'We feel that *Mayhem* will also be seen as a 'flagship' character soon, as we reckon it's better than *Creatures 1* and *2* put together!'. A brave claim indeed, and, we're pleased to say, not far from the truth. Was *Mayhem* always destined to become *Mayhem*, though? Was it intended as *Creatures 3*?

'No', says John. 'It wasn't designed as a sequel to *Creatures 2*. To be honest, they're two different styles of game. In *Mayhem*, the emphasis is placed more on rapid, chaotic action, giving it a far more console-esque feel.'. That's fair enough, but how many people will buy it to see? Can a new original game stand up against a more established one like *Lemmings*, or a licensed product like *Alien 3*?

'Obviously *Alien 3* and *Lemmings* are going to sell well because they're so well-known,' concedes John. '*Mayhem* must make its sales purely on the strength of the game itself. This is one of the reasons we feel it's better than its rivals — we had to make the game good, as we couldn't rely on the name to sell it. Not only that, but our pride wouldn't let us release a bad game!' Fine words, even finer motives.

Finally, we asked John and Steve to describe *Mayhem* in general. Why does it exist? What did they set out to achieve with it? John explains: 'A year ago we could see a gap opening between consoles and home computers, with console owners having *Sonic*, *Mario* and the like to get excited about. So from Day

One we created *Mayhem* to fill this gap, pushing it above anything else ever seen on the C64. With its super-fast full-screen full-colour scrolling, detailed graphics, interactive sound, intelligent monsters, directional attack points, non-standard colours, hidden bonuses, thousands of stars and extras to collect, superb presentation and immense playability, it's as close to a console game as a C64 can get — at a fraction of the price (hee hee).' It would seem all that drinking has impaired their ability to be modest... but hey — Mayhem's a great game. Perhaps they can be forgiven this time...

Obviously, the Rowlands are pleased with Mayhem — and why not? It's probably the best C64 platform games ever and, had it have been around at the time, it would have appeared around the top (if not, *at* the top) of our All-Time Top 100 Games feature. Could there ever be a sequel, though? We can but hope...

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MONSTER GOODIES

Mayhem, eh folks? There's nothing as liberating or uplifting as a fine bit of mayhem every now and then. To cast off the shackles of conformity and swing off on a big tangent, leaving the repression of living in the world of the nineties far behind.

There we have it, friends. That's the very essence of mayhem. Doing things like dressing up as Adam Ant for your Uncle Tony's funeral, or making a scale model of the toilets in St Pancras station out of Notts County season tickets, or giving away — yes, actually *giving* away — a brand new colour TV, among other things.

To celebrate the release of *Mayhem*, we're running a special competition. Stop whatever you're doing, get those crayons out, and draw, draw, draw! We want to see cartoon strips involving Mayhem, but they must be tainted with the stench of chaos. Perhaps a picture of Mayhem fighting with Vinny Jones outside a Solihull kebab shop, or Mayhem performing open heart surgery on Michael Winner (with a tin opener and a Kit Kat, perhaps), or Mayhem, er, doing something else? The funnier the better.

First prize is a monitor, the second prize is a stereo, and there are also ten runners-up prizes of a dinosaur. Or something. In fact, as a tie breaker, complete the following sentence on the back of your submission:

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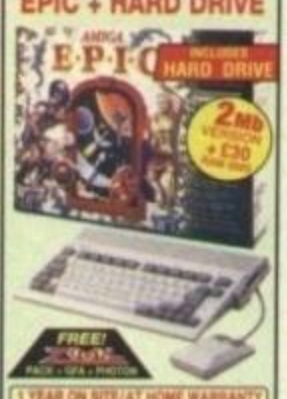

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HURRICANE HIT!

LEMMINGS

It's been a long time coming but finally MILES 'LEMMINGS? HERE? I DON'T BELIEVE IT!' GUTTERY bids a belated welcome to one of the most original games in years. Was it worth it? Read on and find out.

● **Psygnosis £******

Ah-roo! Lemmings is finished at last! What can one say about this one that hasn't been said before? A hundred levels of traps, ravines and retarded rodents, complete with jazzy green hair and blue pullovers.

Actually, I'm perched on the horns of a dilemma here. Traditionally, a review begins with a rundown of the plot, brief appraisal of gameplay and finally a critical conclusion weighing up all good and bad points to justify a final percentage. Unable, as I am, to believe there's an individual unfamiliar with this game, I'm left in the unfortunate position of having the easy two-thirds of the review rendered useless. Hmm — what to do!

I could waffle on about nothing to kill a few hundred words, that'd be easy enough, but no! Am I not a professional? I shall treat this situation as a challenge. I shall write in an amusing and informative way without straying from the point. So, in reverence to those immortal words — 'Let's go!'

> **"A timeless piece of software"**

You're greeted by an animated sequence identical to that found on the 16-bit versions before yomping confidently onto the options screen. Choose music or FX and start difficulty (Fun, Tricky, Taxing or Mayhem) or enter a code for a specific level. Then it's into the classic puzzle-action.

Lemmings demos have floated around in various states of completion forever, or so it seems, but the final game still appears fresh and lively. Background graphics fully capture the flavour of each level with well animated sprites striding around as smooth as you like. Characteristically fine Jeroen Tel toons bounce along so jauntily you hardly notice the lack of those famous samples.

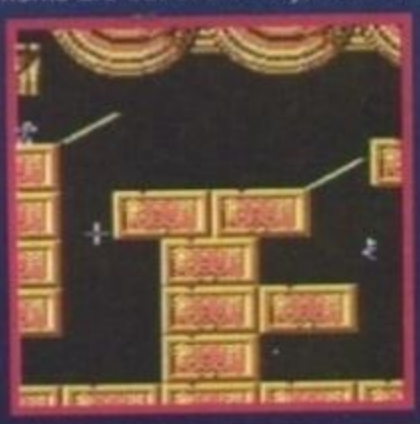
Where things could've become tricky is in the joystick control. A mouse allows you to move almost instantaneously from one part of the screen to another — essential in such a game. To avoid unnecessary fiddling around, actions are highlighted by using the number keys.

Suicide is fun...

To make things easier still, it's possible to scroll around and select icons while paused. This means relative immobility of the joystick and attribute problems are all but eradicated.

Things tend to slow down a tad when there's a lot of activity but this almost seems a blessing, giving precious extra seconds to gather your thoughts. To keep things running at a decent rate, the play area is only about half a screen wide — a little disconcerting at first but fiendish, addictive play soon diverts your attention.

So the compliments are out of the way, now for the fun part — the slagging (cackle!). For a start there's, urn... and then there's... Great Scott! There's really nothing to fault!



● **Bye bye, Lemming! Prepare to splatter...**

● **Believe it or not, that horrible mouth thing is the exit in this instance. Rather them than us; its breath probably smells!**

Horrible hard stuff that Lemmings can't dig through. At least it doesn't kill them...

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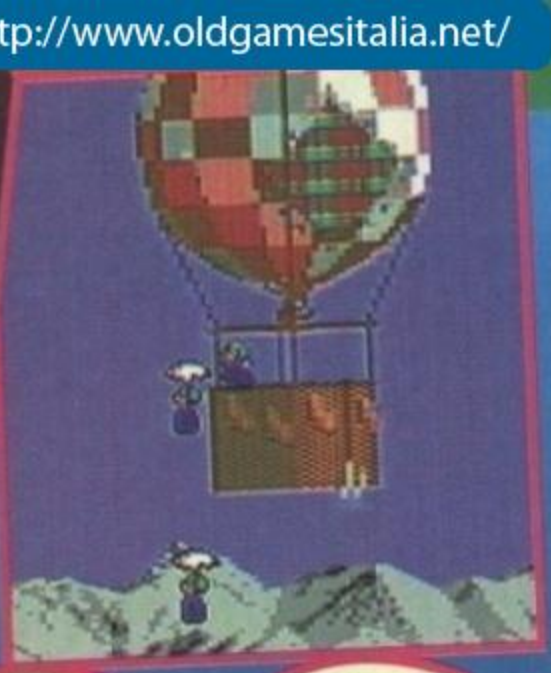
LEMMINGS

Where do Lemmings go when they enter the exit?

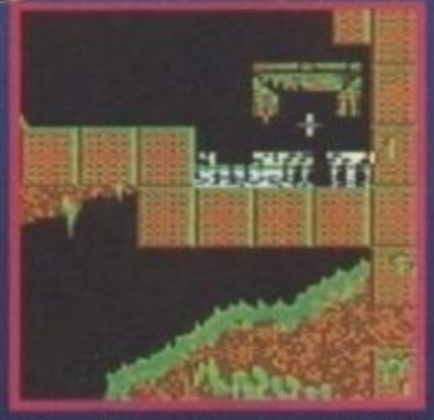


JAMES!

● So it's arrived, then? One of the most talked about — not to mention original — games of all time, *Lemmings* is something else. You could shove it into a category, call it a God or strategy game, but it's still the nail-biting amount of playability that makes it so special. Unlike the Spectrum version, C64 *Lemmings* has up to the maximum 100 potential suicides of the Amiga version on-screen at any one time — Sir Clive's little baby could only handle 20. It even sounds well; Jereon Tel's marvellous tunes are, although a wee bit cute, nevertheless very listenable. In fact, I'm so impressed by '64 *Lemmings*, I'd go as far as to say this is the best 8-bit version I've seen — even its multiload is bearable. In fact, why are you reading this now? Why aren't you nipping out to buy it? Miss this, and you're letting a piece of software history pass you by.

97%

● A Lemmings orgy. Well it's got to be, hasn't it? What else could they be doing?



● Heh heh! Possibly one of Lemmings' most entertaining moments...

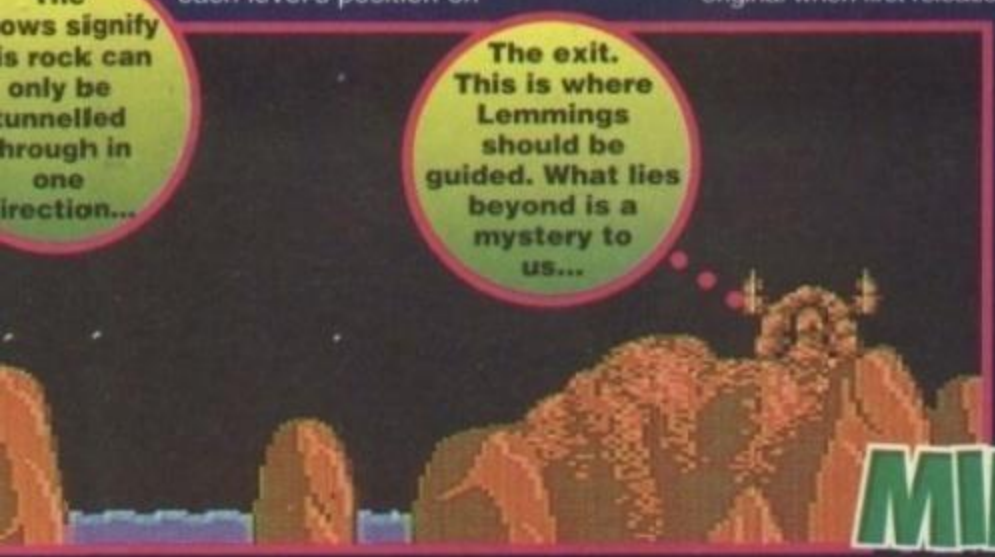
I could gripe about the fact there's never more than thirty Lemmings to a level, but that would over-complicate things. Okay, here's one that never fails — multiload. Get outta this one, Alter Developments. Oh no (no pun intended, honest)! *Lemmings* has the least officious multi-load in history, because when you reach a level, you stay there until it's completed.

All right, so loading's bit of a drag at first, as early levels are so simple, but once you get into the tougher ones it fades into insignificance. Just remember to write down those passwords and make a note of each level's position on the tape counter.

C64 *Lemmings* is a fine achievement. There's only one thing that really goes against it: the timing. The original game's been popular for nearly four years, so the whole thing's just a bit old hat. There was even a Spectrum version way back.

Recent 'Work In Progress' features gave some reasons for its delayed C64 debut, but the question remains — do we still need *Lemmings*? In my opinion (and that of most readers, judging from the mail we get) the answer is 'yes'. It's a classic, totally original when first released and nothing's come close since. Even *Lemmings 2* on the Amiga doesn't have the same charm as its predecessor.

C64 *Lemmings* a spot-on con-version of a computing legend. Don't leave home without it.


The ows signify is rock can only be tunnelled hrough in one irection...
The exit. This is where Lemmings should be guided. What lies beyond is a mystery to us...

MILES! 97%

GALE WARNING

■ PRESENTATION ■ FAITHFUL TO THE 16-BIT AND NO-PROBLEM MULTILOAD — 85%

■ GRAPHICS ■ NEAT SPRITES AND SUPERB BACK GROUNDS — 92%

■ SOUND ■ JOLLY DITTIES PLAY THROUGHOUT — 89%

■ HOOKABILITY ■ SIMPLE LEVELS GET YOU STARTED BUT THEN... — 94%

■ LASTABILITY ■ A HUNDRED LEVELS KEEP YOU AWAKE TILL IT'S VERY LATE — 95%

FORCE FACTOR 97%

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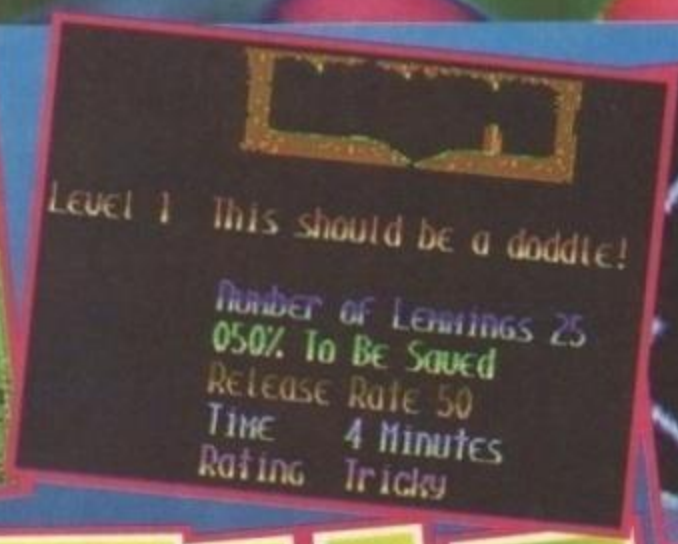

THE MA LEMMI

You can't blame people for being cynical. Convert *Lemmings* to the C64? Impossible. Or so it seemed. E&E software's conversion of the original Amiga classic is every bit as good as we'd hoped it to be.

E&E Software (formally Alter Developments) have just put the finishing touches to *Lemmings* — possibly the most hotly-awaited title for the C64 in years. Despite endless deadline extensions, controversy and, of course, the departure of Nikaj Ejik, they've managed to make it — in our opinion — the best 8-bit version of the DMA Design(ed) classic. After all the ifs and buts, it's finally ready, but, with the benefit of hindsight, would the team do anything differently?

'I would've seen to it that the communication between the members of the team — and Psygnosis — would be better,' admits Remi, 'I'm sure things could have gone a lot smoother.'

Thomas, on the other hand, is more concerned with the technical side of things. 'For a start I'd have used a PC with Cross Assembler and port everything down to the C64, instead of the four C64 set-up I'm using at the moment.'

But did the team ever have their doubts about the conversion? Were they ever tempted to throw the towel in and call it a day? 'Yes, on times such as seven in the morning, having worked through the whole night,' reveals Thomas, 'only to find the disk I'd been saving all my essential code on had corrupted.'

Remi, on the other hand, reveals a more optimistic attitude. 'Not really. Of course, there were moments where things just didn't seem to go the way we'd have wanted them to go, but I never stopped believing we were able to pull it off.'

Jeroen sums it up in a single word: 'No.'

We asked the team about the biggest problem they encountered during production. 'Squeezing as much as possible into the memory — every bit is used,' says Thomas, with Jeroen also having suffered technical difficulties. 'Separating the audio data from the audio driver,' explains the tunester. 'Usually these are loaded into memory at the same time. In *Lemmings*, the driver is loaded once while the data is loaded in every level. This was needed to save disk space.' Thomas' response is a little

Leon: Graphicer

Jeroen: Musician

Remi: Remi!

Thomas: Programmer

THE DAILLY DESIGN

The man behind *Lemmings*, so to speak, is an individual known as Mike Dailly of DMA Design. We asked him how the idea was formed, to which he responded: 'This one's in the history books by now, but if you've lost yours I'm sure I can let you know…

'One lunchtime around August 1990 I was occupying my time by creating a small Dpaint animation. It was only eight frames, but had hundreds of little men walking up to a gun and getting shot. A guy called Gary Timmonds then added some other men, touched up the animations and then we let others see it. Russel Kay — the programmer of PC *Lemmings* and *Lemmings 2* — was somewhat amused and was sure there was a game in there somewhere. He then did some tests — Lemmings walking around, falling etc, and this was shown to Psygnosis at one of the computer shows in London. Later, I did some tests — on a C64 of all things — but eventually Dave Jones took up the challenge on the Amiga, and history was made.' Did Mike think *Lemmings* would be as successful as it has been? 'No.' he says. 'Okay, we thought it would be big, but not… BIG!'

Finally, we enquired about Psygnosis' reaction after first seeing *Lemmings*. Mike confidently answers 'If you remember most people's reaction when they first saw it, it was much the same with Psygnosis. One big "WOW, COOL."'. You can't really say much more than that, can you?

Finally, we managed to get in touch with a fellow

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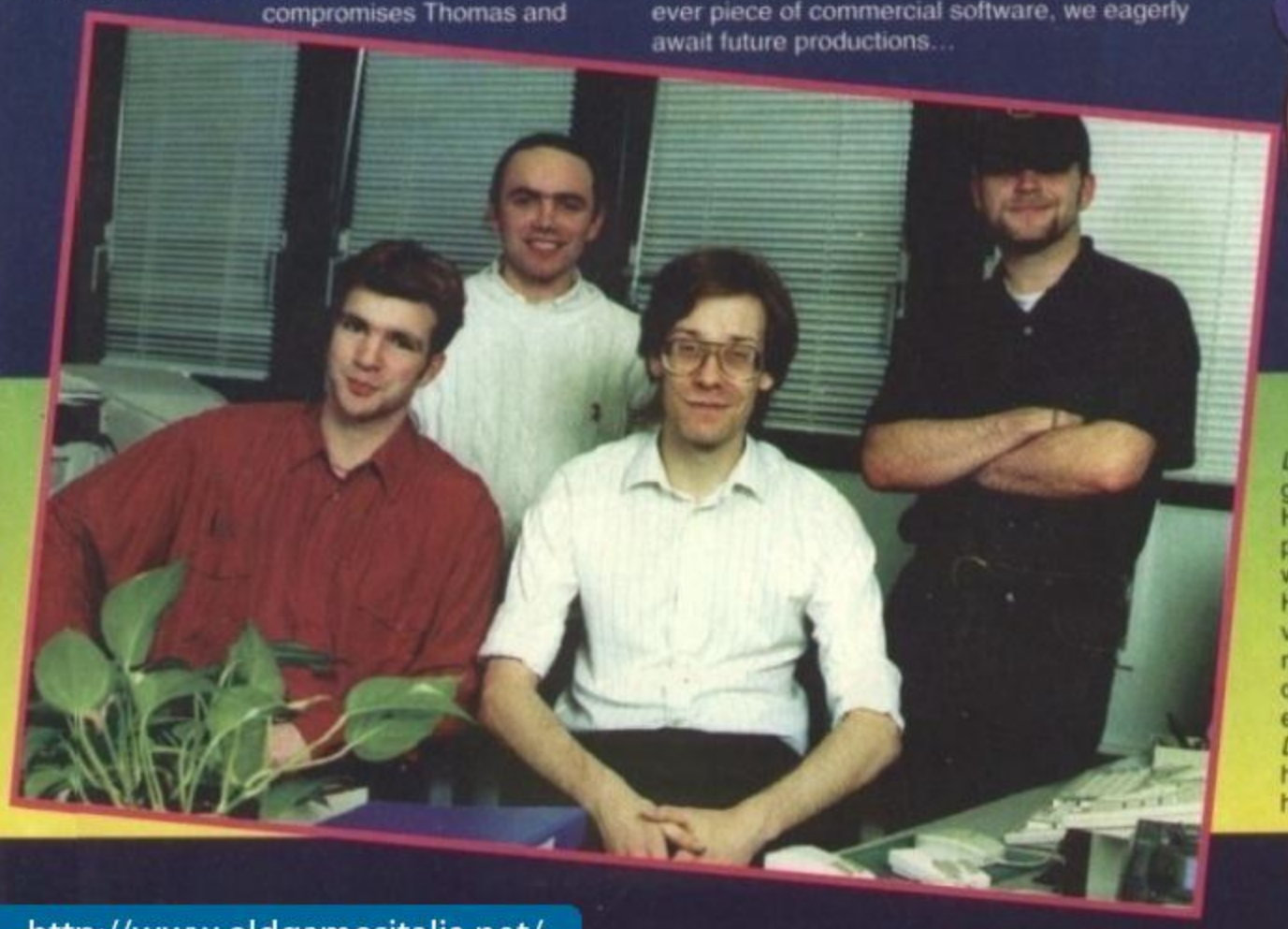
KERS OF IGS

more colourful. 'Only having two different colours out of a pallet of four to create a light source on all the objects and grounds.', with Remi cheekily admitting 'Trying to find new excuses to keep Psygnosis happy and interested!'

Obviously, fitting every element of the Amiga original into the C64 version would be nigh-impossible. What where the most difficult compromises Thomas and Leon had to make as programmer and graphicer respectively? Thomas answers 'Having to squeeze the five-screen Amiga levels into two screens on the C64 — you could say they're completely new levels. Also having to leave out some levels and traps due to memory restrictions.' Leon, again, is preoccupied with golden hues. 'Creating colourful levels with only four colours.' he says, echoing many a graphic artist's dissatisfaction with the C64's limited palette.

But would they do it all again? Remi's indecisive 'I think so... or...' is a sharp contrast to Thomas' quick 'Get real!' However, Leon's far more positive about the project, responding 'Certainly!', in a similar manner to Jereon's 'Absolutely!'

We don't know about you lot out there, but if this is what the E&E guys can do with their first ever piece of commercial software, we eagerly await future productions...



known as Greg Duddle. He's the Producer of *Lemmings*, and has been involved with more games than most people have eaten hot dinners. Having heard about E&E's excuses (Remi's in particular), we asked him what it was like to be working with the team. 'Remi and the others! Hmmm... although a decent, likeable bunch and very competent on the C64, they were notoriously difficult to pin down to any kind of deadline — "it's almost ready, it'll arrive on Friday etc"'. Finally, we enquired if working on C64 *Lemmings* had affected him in any way. 'Aaargh!' he said 'I can't believe it's over!'. Whatever could he mean...?

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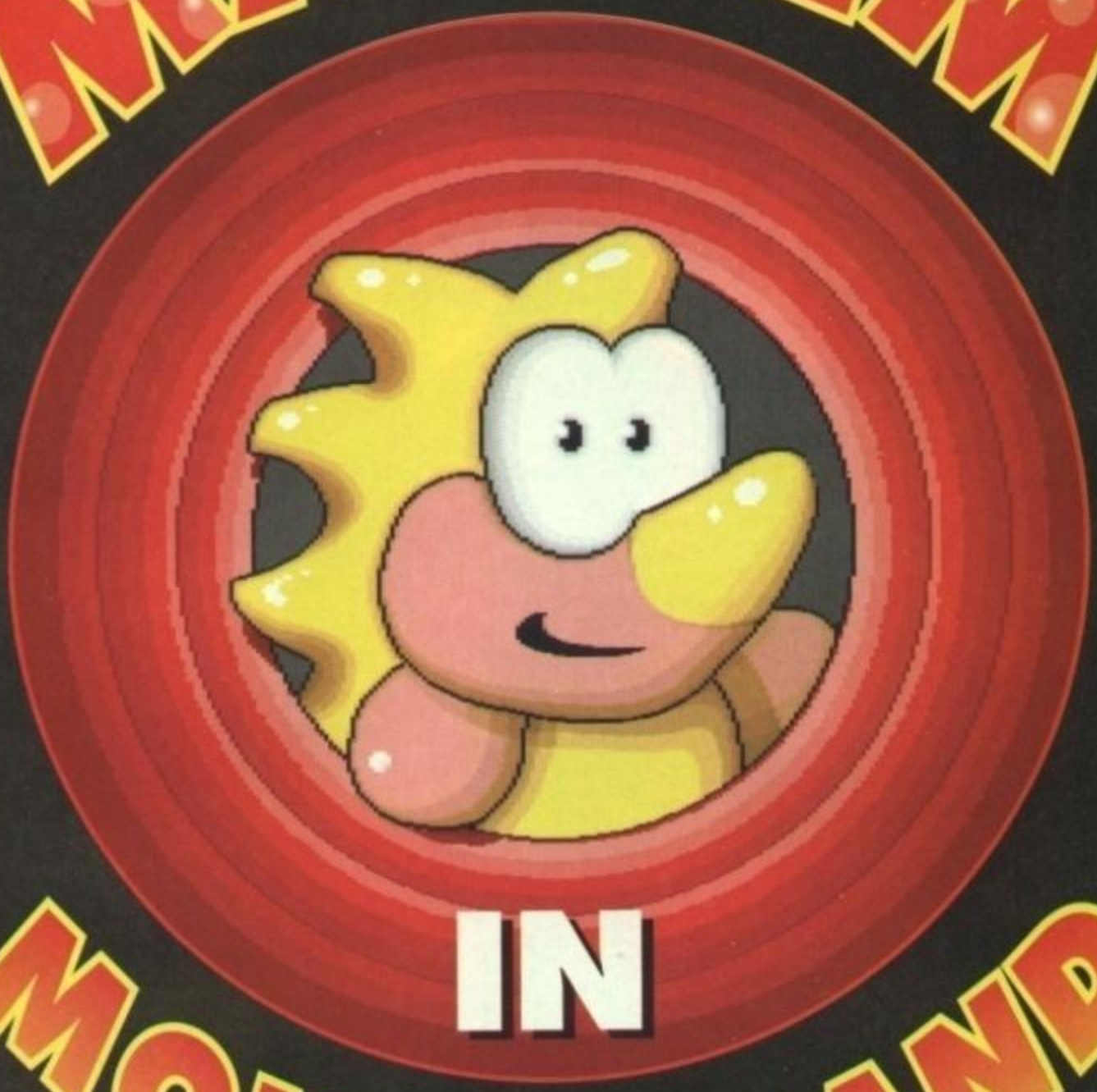
MAYHEM



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THIS GAME HAS BEEN CERTIFIED TOO CUTE!

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From the makers of Creatures and Creatures 2 comes probably the greatest platform game ever created for the C64; Mayhem in Monsterland is an intriguing blend of fast, frenetic platform action, with five wickedly cute levels to explore. Featuring the cutest dinosaur ever to emerge from the Jurassic period, you'll soon forget all about Italian plumbers and spikey blue hedgehogs.

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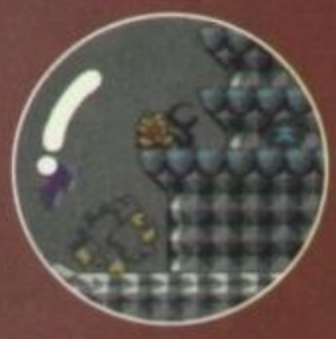

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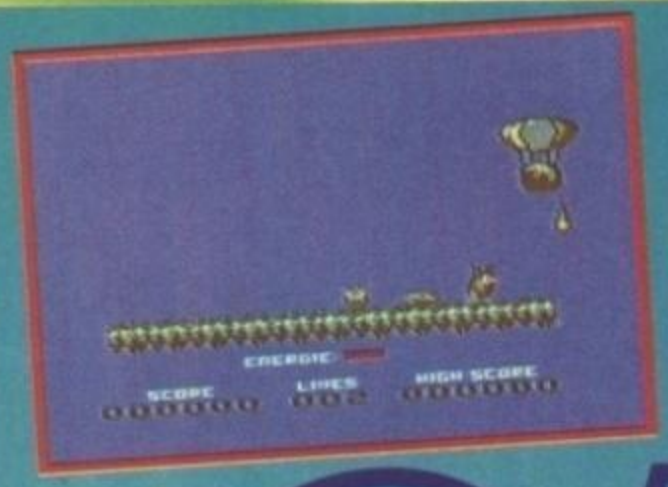

PD GAMES TAPE 2

● Binary Zone PD, £6.00

In a world where money talks, not to mention an industry where it also sings, dances and plays a variety of musical instruments it's good to see there's still some people in it for pleasure at the expense of profit. MILES 'JINGO — THAT'S VERY REASONABLE FOR THE PRICE' GUTTERY pulls on his bargain-boots and wades into Binary Zone's new PD compilation...

You may be thinking there's a lack of software around for the C64 these days. Of course it would be silly to suggest the scene to be as prolific as it was. The heady days of the late eighties when C64s really were number one are now truly behind us but, despite the steady decline in quantity (though not necessarily quality) of commercial software over the last 18 months, there's still one area thriving, probably more than ever before — Public Domain. That's where many of tomorrow's main programming bods are today. Gaining experience, sharpening up their routines and, most importantly, getting 'heard about'.

You're sure to have read Public Sector in which our good mate from the land of clogs and dykes, the eminent Remi Ebus, writes about the latest demos to check out. These usually involve spanky visual and/or sonic effects, to which you sit there and say 'Cor, that's a bit clever!'. But that's all you do — sit there. Fortunately there's more to PD than snazzy demos — it's also a rich source for cheap, original games. In recognition of this top C64 PD suppliers, Binary Zone, have compiled 42 playable games on one tape, all for the nominal fee of six quid (that's 14.286 pence per game if you're interested).

As you'd expect it's a pretty mixed bag. Something for everyone you might say. Homage is payed to crusty arcade/console 'classics' with *Galaxian* and a playable enough (or at least as ever it was) rendition of *Pong*. You know the one — each player has a bat either side of the screen, the idea being to hit a 'ball' back and forth unt someone misses. Forgettably enthralling, character block graphics 'n' all. There's even a *Donkey Kong* variant, but I don't remember *DK* being sc blimmin' hard! Barrels and fireballs come at such a rate it's unlikely you'll ever get to Kong, let alone rescue that poor damsel.

Inevitably there's a sprinkling of SEUCK-'em-ups lurking amongst the other title ranging from deeply dull to the quite impressive. Most visually pleasing is *Grod The Pixie*. Beautifully sculpted backdrops add a lot to fairly unchallenging gameplay. There's also one or two from the man himself, Alf Yngvie.

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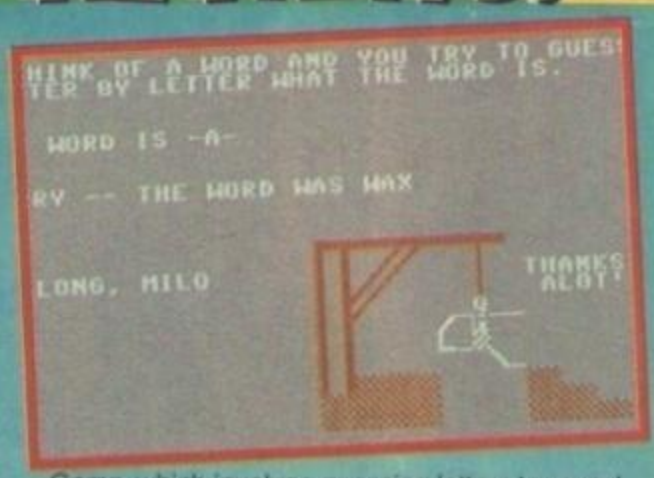
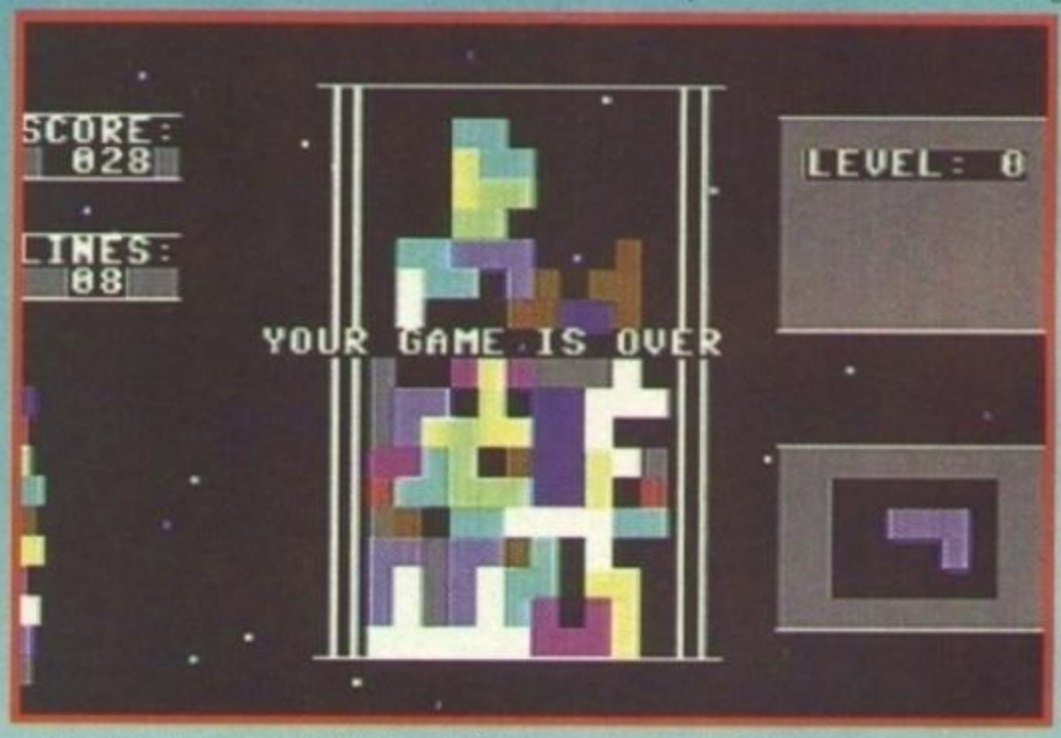


...ES

Tête a Tetris

A couple of adventures rear their texty heads on side two, *Haunted Mansion* being the better of these. Don't get over-excited, though, as it's a pretty mediocre affair with very poor responses, a limited vocabulary (it didn't even seem to understand 'EXAMINE'!) and not much to see. If it's puzzles you're after then three *Tetris* clones are on offer, the best of these being *Twister*. It looks fairly sedate but this belies a fiendishly-challenging and addictive little number. Ten skill levels are certain to keep you going for that extra line or two, making it without doubt the pack's most outstanding title. Another variation on the theme is *Vioris*. Its clear, uncluttered play area is attractive and there's the added bonus of a two player mode, in which creating multiple lines compresses your opponents screen. It's only let down by slightly unresponsive controls, but still a good blast. The third is *Rotations*, but unclear graphics and frustratingly-slow play kill it stone dead.



Novelty value comes in the form of *Creaper* and *Creaper 2*. The games themselves are completely and utterly naff, but quite amusing as backgrounds and sprites are directly lifted from the *Creatures* games (Probably — Legal Ed). Play consists of walking to and fro on a static screen collecting items while avoiding baddies — Clyde wouldn't be amused.

For the dictionarily-minded there's a couple of word/phrase guessing games. There's *Hangman* — everyone knows that one — and *The Name Game*, which involves guessing letters to reveal a well-known title, saying etc. It's not too well thought out, though; one phrase it came up with was 'Throw out the gauntlet' — yes, well... Still, if you're bored stiff it's something to do, I s'pose.

As proceedings draw to a close, anyone who enjoyed that ancient fossil of a chestnut *Horace And The Spiders* on the Spectrum will be pleased to hear *Monster Panic* pays it more than a respectful nod. The screen's made up of a series of walkways linked by ladders and patrolled by nasty creatures. You're armed with a hefty mallet — the idea being to knock holes through platforms which the monsters will attempt to mend. However, while they're making their repairs you can sneak up and blat them. Once you kill all the enemies on one screen, you start again with more monsters.

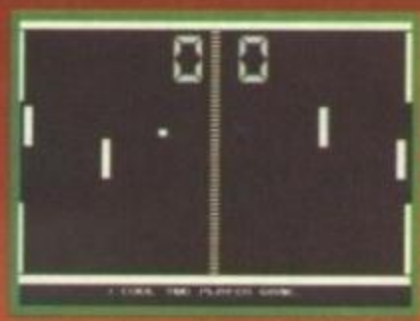
Monster Panic's not bad but a bit jerky and sluggish.

Without wanting to slate the pack (42 games for six smackeroonies — c'mon) there's no getting away from the fact that, apart from the *Tetris*-ites, one or two SEUCKed efforts and a couple of others there's nothing here to keep you playing for more than a couple of minutes. It's very cheap but, for the most part, not all that cheerful.

MILES! 65%

PD OR NOT PD?

Hey, we're getting good at these duff headings, aren't we? Nevertheless, it's always very difficult to rate individual PD games or collections. Could you compare any of it to, say, *Alien 3*? Or *Lemmings*? The list could go on and on. PD is cheep, cheerful and a laugh. However, it can't compare to well-written full-price software, and that's why *PD Games Tape 2* is rated 65% — it's an above-average compilation, but ignore the 50% fillers and you've a distinctly smaller collection of games, *some* of which you'll play more than once. Also, even though you get a fair amount of code, six pounds is quite a bit of money to pay for PD...



● Pong in all it's glory. Despite the name the game doesn't smell half as bad as it looks!

● In a time before platforms the world was in darkness. Then came Kong and we saw the light.

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Lemmings

On sale December '93

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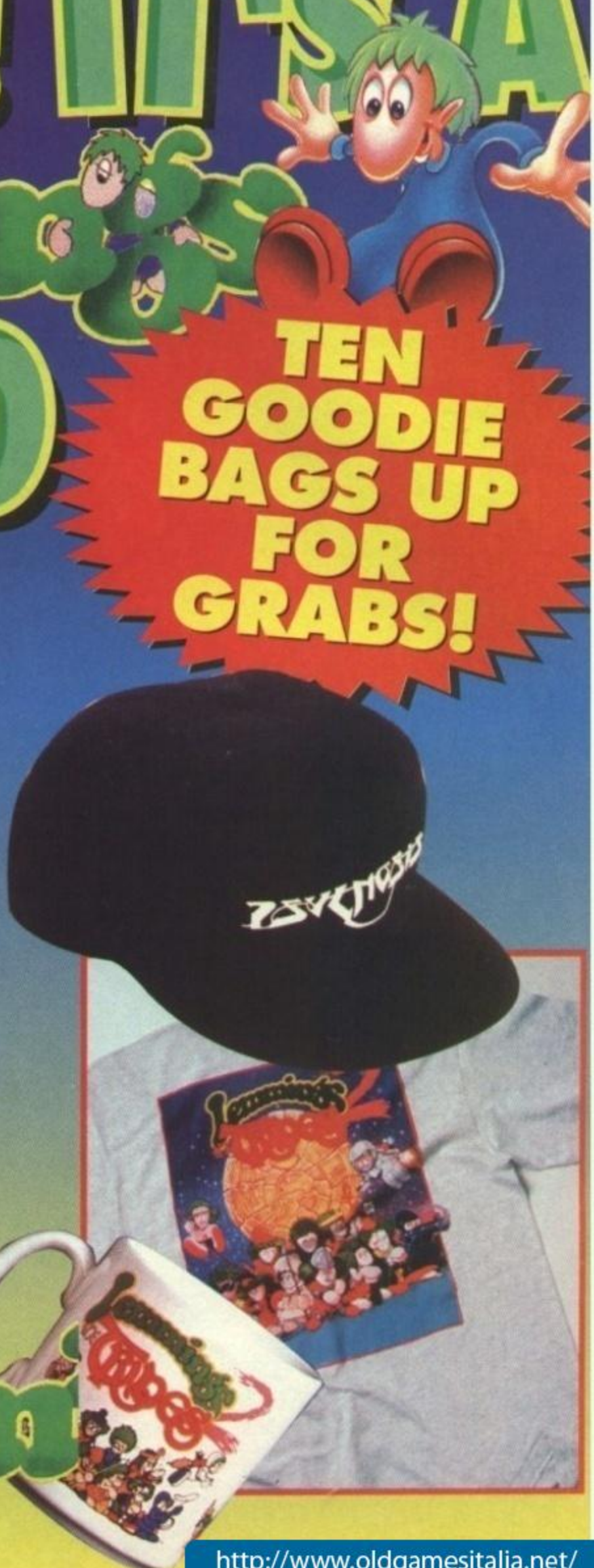
OH NO! IT'S A Lemmings COMPO

TEN GOODIE BAGS UP FOR GRABS!



Howdy folks!It's COMMODORE FORCE compo time again. Yep, to commemorate the cataclysmic events of this month — firstly me (Miles) crashing my car (again! — Just So Happened To Be Passenger Ed) and secondly *Lemmings*, we've gotten together with Psygnosis to bring you another great opportunity to grab a load of free loot.

So (sob), there I was, driving merrily along on my way to work, the sweet melodies of The Georgia Satellites billowing from the stereo. There's nothing like cruising to some cool sounds with the highway stretching ahead of you, then KKERUMP! Some dope had parked right in the middle of the road and yours truly obligingly ploughed straight into him. My lovely new car now resides at the local garage, a sorry sight to behold. It's headlamps smashed, bumper bent and shiny fender buckled and broken. Excuse my whining but it's been a bummer of a week...

But back to the comp. There's ten goody bags containing Lemmings and Psygnosis merchandise that must be won. Hats, T-shirts — you name it, it's in these bundles of brilliance, probably. If you'd like to lay your hands on one then here's how to get in with a chance — just think up an answer to our little *Lemmings*-related one-liner:

Q : Why did the Lemming cross the road?

A : .....

The least cringeworthy ten w... ...d by our good selves and the send... rewarded. Send your entries to...

Oh dear, they really are scrapi... of the barrel for these competitio... COMMODORE FORCE, Impact ... Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.

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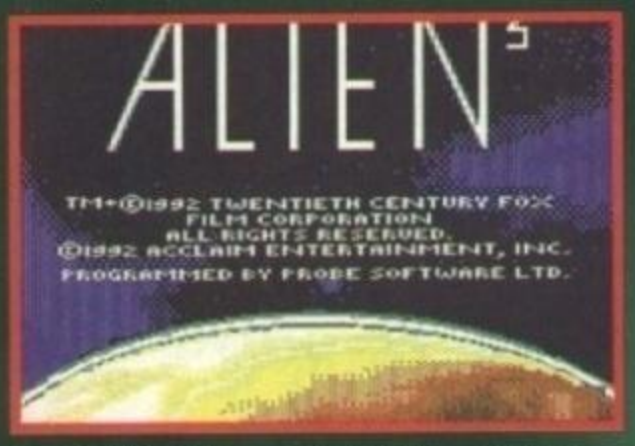
ALIEN 3

Virgin, £TBA Cassette, £TBA Disk

It's hardly sociable, is it? To jump onto someone's face and impregnate them? Or, come to think of it, ripping them apart in a single flick of a tentacle! Aliens are a nasty bunch and should be wiped out on sight. JAMES 'FACE HUGGER' PRICE sets his flamethrower on Deep Fat Fry...

Look, it's not a bad thing to play games on other systems, okay? Rarely a day goes by without us receiving a letter that condemns every console/16-bit game in existence. Personally, I've always believed that each system has its merits, and to dismiss every other format... it's just pointless, right? The C64 has a massive software base, with some of its titles head and shoulders above other machines' efforts in terms of playability, design and general excellence. These days, multi-format releases are commonplace; on the C64, they tend to be a little dodgy due to the fact they're cut-down versions of games designed


ALIEN 3
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PROGRAMMED BY PROBE SOFTWARE LTD.

specifically for other — mainly 16-bit — systems. Of course, there's an exception to every rule; releases such as *Robocop*, *Navy Seals* and others have been far better than their counterparts. Which, quite neatly I feel, brings us onto the subject of *Alien 3*. Having been released on the Mega Drive and SNES to much critical acclaim, it's now available for the C64. It compares favourably.

In the Alien 3 film, Ellen Ripley (heroine of the two previous Alien films), Newt (a young girl rescued in the previous film), Bishop (a simulant partially killed by the alien queen in Aliens) and Sgt Hicks (a member of the doomed team of marines in Aliens) crash down on the prison planet known simply as Fiorina 161. Hicks and Newt die instantly; Bishop is, due to the fact the planet is devoid of

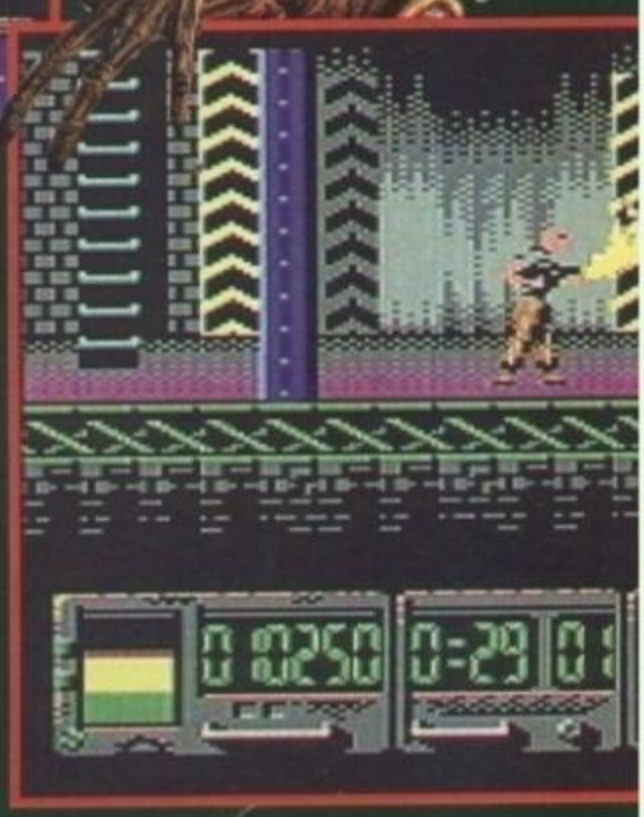
technology required to repair him in any way, effectively dead as well. Ripley is rescued by the prisoners and their small contingent of supervising officers, and spends a week recuperating in the prison's infirmary. After recovering sufficiently, Ripley becomes convinced that a Face Hugger — a creature responsible for the forcible (and subsequently fatal) impregnation of the alien seed — was aboard her craft before and during the crash. Unbeknownst to the unfortunate alien-killing veteran, that very creature escaped immediately after the collision with the planet, and infected a dog.

Unfortunately, Fiorira 161 is devoid of any potential alien-wasting weapons, leaving the prisoners vulnerable. Picked off one by one, they eventually dispatch of the Giger-designed creature by way of an elaborate plan — trapping it and submerging it in molten metal.

Disregarding the plot...

So here's the real laugh of the day; in C64 *Alien 3*, Ripley's absolutely loaded with weapons. Flamethrowers, repeater rifles, grenades... you name it, she'll blow up an alien with it. Of which, coincidentally, there are many — the one critter of the film appears to have become literally hundreds during the conversion. Through nine-or-so levels, Ripley has to avoid (or destroy) the alien menace while finding and rescuing trapped prisoners.

A tight time limit counts down while she moves — and she moves well. Through the multidirectionally-scrolling areas, Ripley runs, shoots and climbs in a well animated (if a little rough-looking) manner; the aliens are also fairly well-defined. *Alien 3*'s back-grounds are



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One thing that DID bug us about Alien 3 is that, when Ripley slides (above), it's a slow and ponderous happening. Surely it could've been a bit faster, yes?

— at times — stunning, providing cosmetic excellence while not impeding the main flow of the game.

Film licences became big business around 1985, when software houses began to realise just how lucrative movie tie-ins can be. Sadly, the quality of the actual games was frequently neglected; glossy advertisements, packaging and — of course — the well-known name often disguised unplayable software with little in common with their cinematic subject matter. If we're honest, quality film-based games are few and far between — you know what? *Alien 3* is one of the 'few'. It doesn't follow its parent's plot closely — quite the opposite in fact — and despite its obvious technical excellence, it's glitchy in places. But with its large amount of options, surprisingly unobtrusive multi-load and large, well-designed levels, *Alien 3*'s a winner. It sounds good, it's large and challenging... in fact, I'd go back and play it for a while longer if it wasn't forthis damn stomach-ache I've got...

ey's lutely d with pons

JAMES! 94%

MILES!

Wow! After playing this on SNES, Megadrive and Amiga I was a little dubious as to how well the C64 would cope, but concern turned to relief seconds after taking up the joystick. Instead of turning out a poor, formula effort bearing no relation to its classy 16-bit big brothers (Addams family anyone?), C64 *Alien 3*'s a straight conversion of the Amiga game (almost — level layouts vary a little). So should they have bothered? Yes, yes and thrice yes! Worra great job Probe have done — retaining all the game's atmosphere with slick sprites, quality animation, all set in a dank, claustrophobic game world faithful to the film (are you sure about this Miles? — Ed). Ripley has an impressive array of firepower but it's up to you to decide what's best and where. Basically, *Alien 3* proves the ol' 64 can still mix it with the best of them — it's a first-class tie-in, grade-A conversion and wicked action adventure no gung-ho xenophobe should neglect to own.

91%

Hey! This is a big caption, isn't it? What literary gems can I write here, I wonder? If only Clive left small spaces, like that nice Claire woman. Ahh, but that's just life, I suppose. Now where was I...

CURVACEOUS COLLECTABLES

Pulse Rifle
Fires rapid bursts of mildly powerful shots.

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Slow but devastating — useful against the three gaurdians.

Flame Thrower
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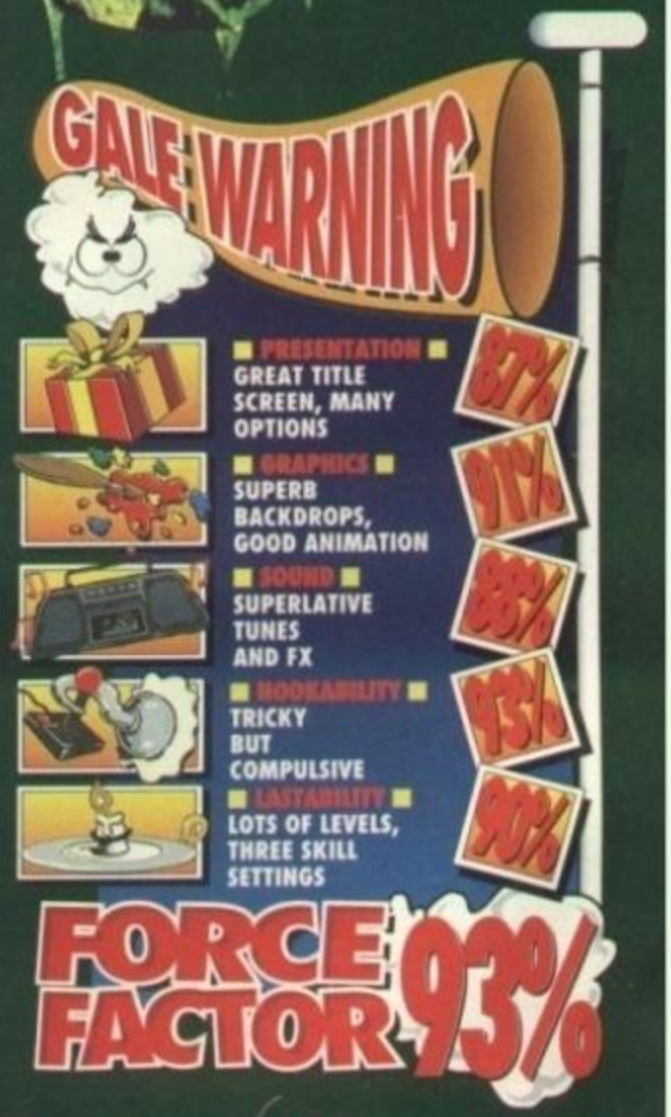

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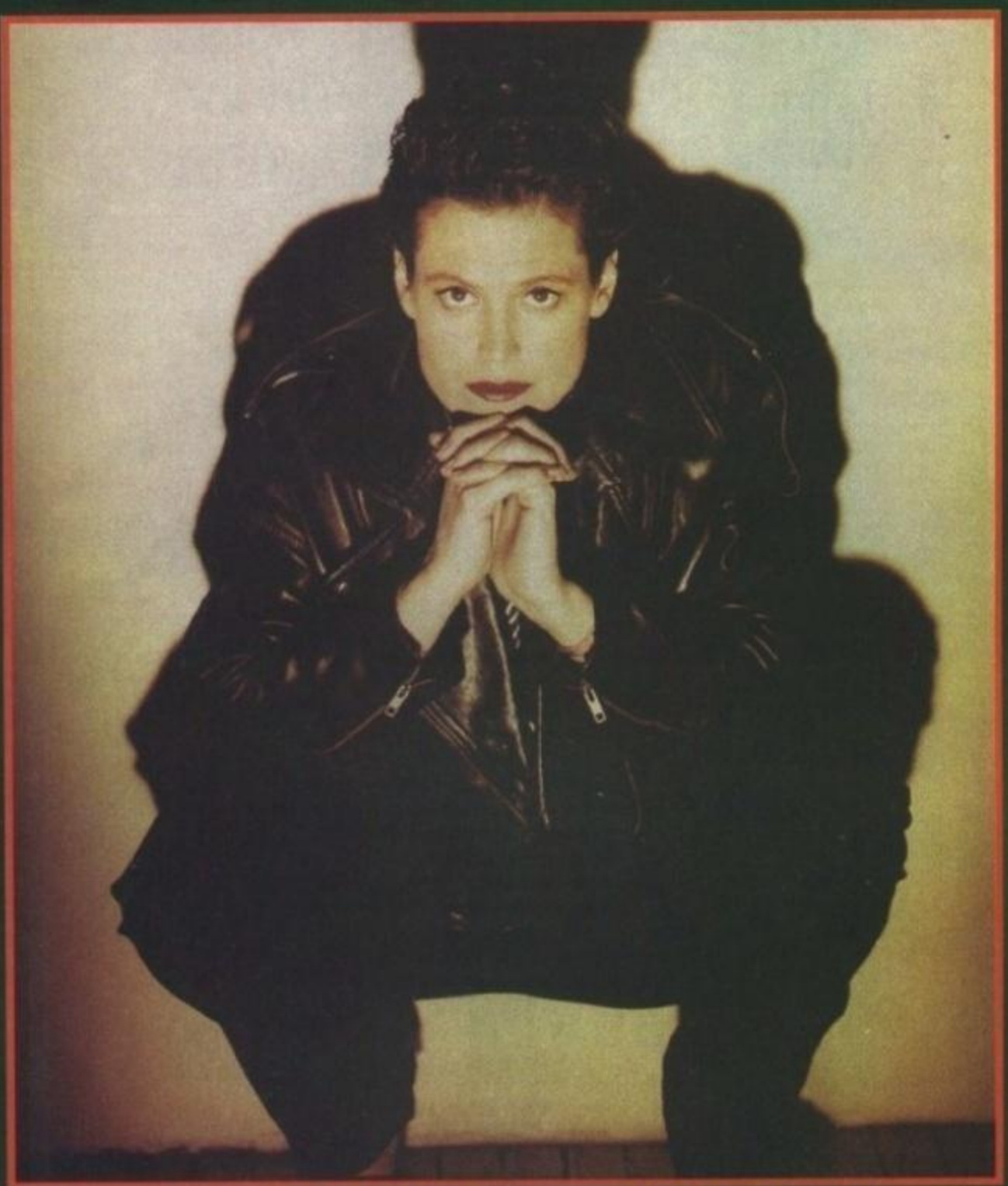
SIGOURNE



At the end of the third (and quite possibly last) Alien film, viewers saw Ripley — actress Sigourney Weaver — die. Bearing in mind Ripley's importance in the films, is this the end of the Alien as we know it? What does Sigourney think herself? ALAN BRYCE investigates...

'I like playing women who are isolated from others,' says Sigourney Weaver, 'Women who are aloof from society. I've never wanted to play wives and mothers. Give me the role of a psychotic or a villainess any day!'.

Her most famous role is — of course — that of Warrant Officer Ellen Ripley, full-time alien-hunter and the thinking sci-fi buff's pin-up. As the sole survivor of the doomed spaceship Nostromo, she encountered the deadly Xenomorph menaces for the last time in the doomy, gloomy *Alien 3*. Though audiences didn't respond well to Sigourney's swansong movie, the 42-year-old actress maintains that the film turned out exactly as she had hoped it would. 'We all gave it our best shot,' she shrugs. 'But the pressure was too great to equal the commercial success of the previous movies.'.

According to Weaver, there wasn't any given time when the *Alien* masterminds just said, 'Oh, let's just do another one'. It was a very slow process and a long struggle to get the project going in the first place.

'Clearly, audiences wanted more after the huge success of *Aliens*, but we approached it with a great deal of trepidation because the first two movies were so successful and so well done — everyone was worried that the third wouldn't measure up to the high standards set by Ridley Scott and James Cameron. It took a long time figuring out what story we should tell and what elements we would try and duplicate.'.

'We all decided early on that Cameron had done guns so brilliantly it would be best not to reprise that aspect, only when we could come up with an original idea and a wonderful director to match did we all agree to go ahead.'.

According to Weaver, Fox initially approached Ridley Scott to direct *Alien 3*, but he was busy in pre-production on his Columbus epic, *1492*. Instead, they found that 'wonderful director' in Vincent Yard, the eccentric and hugely talented film maker responsible for the much-praised medieval fantasy, *The Navigator*. His input was to set the film on a prison planet and stir in lots of religious themes, and an unusual Gothic atmosphere.

'Ward's concept was very original, and an arresting one as far as I was concerned,' says Weaver. 'but for various reasons, he felt he could not stay with the production. To be frank, I think he never really wanted to make an *Alien* picture in the first place. There's a big responsibility aside from just telling a story. Perhaps he didn't think he was up to the demands. I don't know...'

A replacement was eventually found in pop video director David Fincher, who was very young but keen to tackle the enormous responsibility. 'The directors have always been the stars of each *Alien* movie, really,' states the actress, 'and until we found the right genius, the *Alien 3* project never felt set. Only when Fincher appeared did we feel we were in good hands.

'The first words out of his mouth were, 'Shave Ripley's head!'. And I knew instantly he wasn't going to be a quiet and undaring director. To be honest, I was busy having my baby, Charlotte, during the elongated pre-production period, so the longer it took, the happier I was.'.

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EY SPEAKS

Background effects

'David Fincher's background is in special effects,' she explains. 'He worked at Industrial Light and Magic for years as a matte painter. And to make this type of movie, you need that kind of specific knowledge and willingness to pay attention to small details. Although *Alien 3* was his feature debut, he'd shot miles of rock video film. We looked at his whole body of work.'.

'However, David being an unknown was the least of our problems. Remember that Ridley Scott had only directed *The Duellist* before he did the original *Alien*, and James Cameron really only had *Piranha 2* before *Aliens*. Are those any better qualifications for making an *Alien* movie? Fincher was great to work with, and very funny on what was a difficult, freezing, uncomfortable set at Pinewood studios.'

Weaver insists she had few misgivings about shaving her head for the role. 'There are loads of strange haircuts in England anyway, so I didn't really get that much attention on the street, even though I was a six-foot-tall bald woman! My husband (theatre director Jim Simpson) was very supportive. He told me he liked it. But after my hair

had finally grown back, he admitted he hated it. My daughter tried not to look at me. But she didn't have any hair either! I found it liberating. None of the cast had hair so it was an indentifying mark. If you were bald at Pinewood, you were in the picture.'

Some critics of the movie have unkindly suggested that because the cast are all bald it makes it hard to tell the characters apart. 'I totally disagree,' says Sigourney. 'It was a story point. The planet was infested with deadly lice, so everyone's head had to be shaved. I felt it made people's faces jump out more and focused on their vulnerability , audiences are given enough to indicate who they are. There was some religious stuff we shot that didn't make the final cut — prayer meetings, etc — showing them in their world more. But that communicates itself well, I think. People know what to expect from the *Alien* tradition and it didn't have to be dwelt on.'

As for it being cast with mainly British performers, Sigourney thinks that the actors' regional accents pose more of a problem for British audiences than the Americans when it comes to being able to take the film seriously. 'The Americans love it,' she smiles, 'although I do keep getting asked what a 'w****r' is!'

Early press reports stated that Weaver refused to sign on the dotted line until she was paid the sum of £2.5 million (she only got £18,000 for *Alien*) and was given complete script approval. She explains, 'What I actually said was that I love the character of Ripley and want her to do something she hasn't had the chance to do before. Certain things are built into an *Alien* script: Ripley has to say, 'There's an Alien here' and no one will believe her. Within that framework I wanted Ripley to have a different set of circumstances and the writers came through brilliantly.'.

'For a long time in *Alien 3*, she's the Alien herself — despised, feared and outcast. That's the one reason she's not afraid of these men. The system has thrown her onto the garbage heap as well. The whole idea of starting life again by having her love affair with Charles Dance and making her deal with her illness and mortality was all new material for me, which I found extremely challenging. Selfishly, I wanted those new challenges to interest the actress within me while adhering to the basic storyline.'

According to Weaver the third *Alien* movie is all about motherhood. 'With regards to the sexual politics and possible AIDS analogy, it's not for me to say what Thames people see in this movie,' she says. 'While it was hard not to think of AIDS while shooting the picture, that goes for every movie in general these days. Motherhood is the through-line. It was Fincher's idea to make the ending a tender, not brutal one. It may be an Alien Queen foetus that Ripley is carrying, but it is still her child. I wanted to be a mother for a while until I was successful at it. And I wanted Ripley to have a normal life as much as possible. That tension between normalcy and clearly not being able to have it brings Ripley into an intimacy with the Alien that the writers and I talked about a lot. The irony was never lost on me. Ripley had a daughter and she lost her, Newt was her surrogate daughter and she lost her too. Now she carries a third 'daughter' within her, and it costs her her life.'

Weaver's co-producer credit on *Alien 3* entitled her to a further three percent of the film's worldwide profits, but it also meant that she had to get involved in some important production decisions. 'The pressure from the studio was the hardest,' she sighs. 'I'd be on the telephone practically every day asking them to reduce it and give us more breathing space, because we were under enough strain as it was.'.

The film's single most controversial scene is the bleak ending, but according to Sigourney it's not such a big deal. 'What you see is what you get,' she shrugs. 'Sure, the climax did resemble *Terminator 2*, but we didn't change it. We got wind of the *T2* ending just as we started principal shooting. We smuggled a copy off the set and read it. In the earliest script draft, Ripley just took the slime dive. But eventually it was felt that *Alien 3* had to finish with the two most powerful icons of all three movies taken as a whole — Ripley and the chest-burner. We decided that would be *Alien* enough and couldn't be related to any other film.'.

'Vincent Ward had an ending where Ripley choked up the foetus, got back into a space vessel and went away. I though that was ridiculous. There was something very depressing about her heading off in a shuttle again. The ending as it stands seems to me to be the correct one. Survival has lost its allure. This is her destiny, she saves the world. She kills the last Alien. She makes the right choice.'.

In the end she says that what she admired most about the character of Ripley was the fact that she is so cool-headed and never panics. 'She never thinks about what could go wrong, and has been such a privilege to play because she is totally different from me. She's a comforting presence and great company. I'll miss that. But there's only so much bad luck a person should have, and she has reached her limit!'.

While Sigourney's *Alien* involvement is over on the acting side, she may yet co-produce the next far-off sequel. Fox definitely has a script for an *Alien VS Predator* spin off, but that may have to wait until other avenues are exhausted.

'There are so many strands to explore,' she says. 'What is the Alien doing wrong? Where does it come from? What does it want from the human race? How does it communicate? I'd like to see all these ideas developed. To my mind, the Alien image is anything that terrifies each of us on a highly personal level, manifested as the ultimate indestructible nightmare.'.

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SPOT TOP

● Zeppelin £TBA

Sports. Either you've got it or you haven't — and the COMMODORE FORCE crew fall into the latter category. We do manage to do the odd bit of exercise — James does some weightlifting ('guys, guys — I've got three pints in one hand'), Lloyd carries the letters bag into his office, and MILES 'OLYMPING OFF THE COURT' GUTTERY plays squash. As he's the sportiest, we reckoned Zeppelin's latest compilation was his kind of thing...

Cripes — what a lot of sports sims in one easy-to-swallow package. Now that's what I call VFM — or is it?

INTERNATIONAL TRUCK RACING

Thundering around tortuous racing circuits in a huge super-charged articulated lorry may sound jolly exciting, but Zeppelin's interpretation of this obscure sport really isn't. Having totally failed to give any feeling of weight to these monster machines, the racing's nonetheless quite fun. Building up various aspects of your truck's performance with prize money from previous races requires tactical thought, as does deciding whether or not to head into the pits for extra fuel and damage repairs during a tight race.

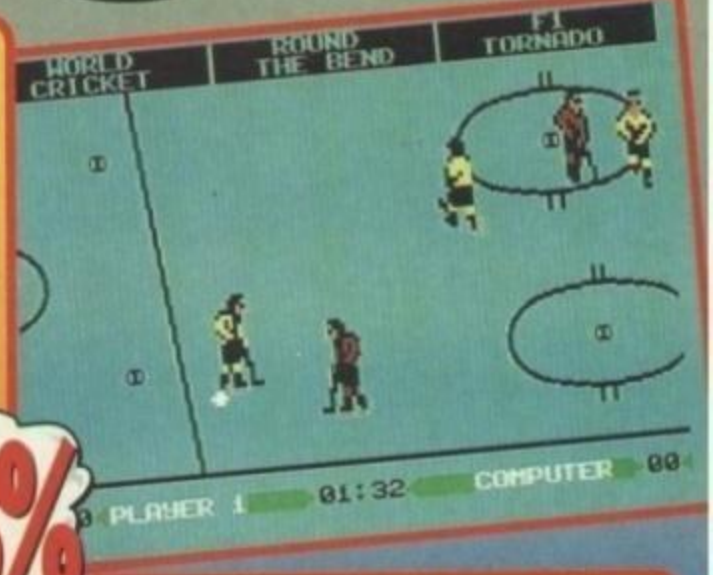
If you've got half an hour to spare, here's a harmlessly merry way to fill the time.

68%

INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY

Ugh! Surely I can't be expected to sit down and actually attempt to play this dungy little effort. Control over your particularly badly-drawn players is utterly frustrating. Unresponsive in the extreme and the highly erratic inertia just compounds annoyance. You can be toodling along at a sedate pace one second and then, before you know it, you find yourself hurtling towards the wall completely out of control. Tackling is near impossible with any accuracy — even with two players any competitive element is dwarfed by mountainous boredom. Farcical.

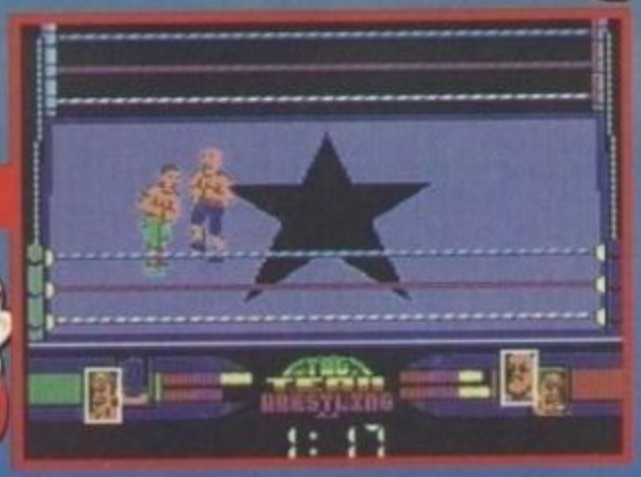
18%



AMERICAN TAG TEAM WRESTLING

Bleurgh! Minimal moves, dire graphics, need I say more... okay then — appalling sound, befuddling collision detection and animation of low quality. It's very bad, it's very bad it's very very bad, very very bad...

23%



WORLD RUGBY

I must say the most enjoyment I ever derived from this most violent of sports was the hilarious 'odd shaped ball' jokes — and they weren't very funny. So could *World Rugby* be the game that opens my mind to the sport of heavy tackles and heavier drinking? Ahem — no! A management game in which all you do is choose the best fifteen players from your limited squad and... hang on, there isn't any more to it! It looks nice enough, but actually calling this a 'game' is to stretch the term. Not even the most fanatical of fans will get anything out of it.

30%

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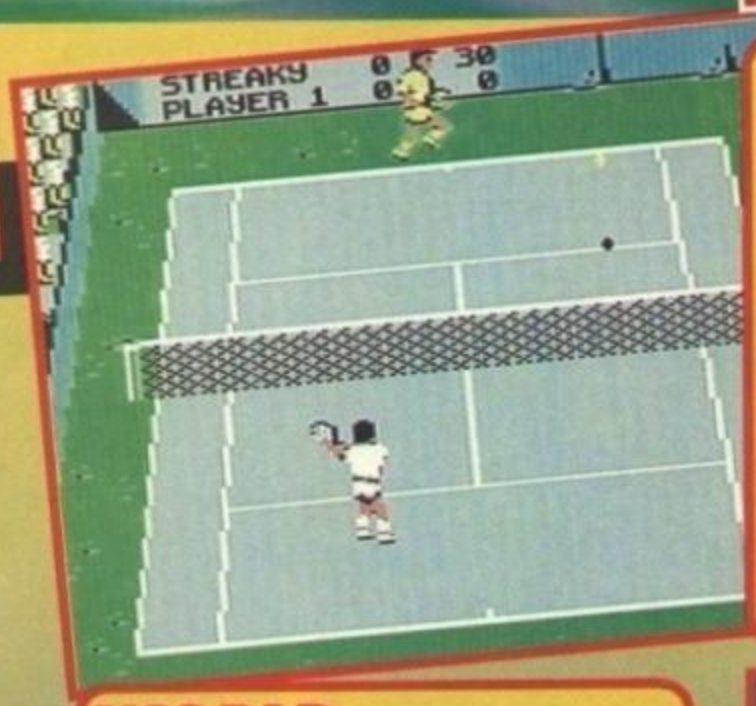
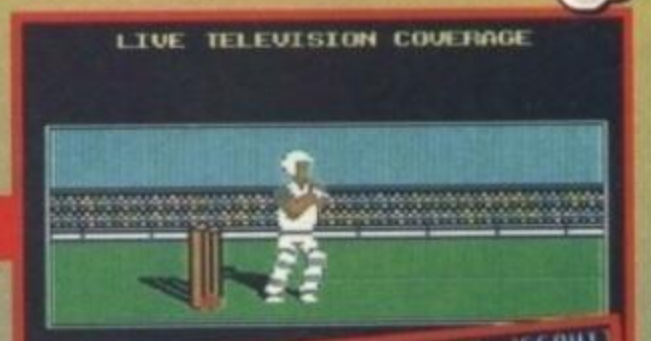


INTERNATIONAL TENNIS

All the important options for a tennis simulation are incorparated into *International Tennis*. There's a tournament, one- and two-player friendlies — there's even an enjoyable little game to match. Its controls are as instinctive as you could wish for, with a variety of shots that you'll be playing like a professional after a couple of goes. Of course it's at its best if you get a friend in to play against; even so, the computer provides more than satisfactory opposition for the lonesome among you. Good, easily accessible strawberries 'n' cream fun.

84%



WORLD CRICKET

Cricket management — now there's something you don't see very often in a computer game. Well there's quite a simple reason for that actually, there's not very much to do. Once you've set the options (one day match, test, tour, etc) all that's left is to choose the batting/fielding order then let the game play itself, and that's what it does for the most part. It's nicely presented and everything but you just don't get much feeling of involvement. What's more, I'm not convinced it actually follows the rules of the game all that closely. Couple this with some dodgy tactical decisions by the computer — during one test match I played it declared at 147 in the first innings — you're left with a rather unsatisfactory effort.

52%

CARNAGE

Overhead viewed single-screen tracks are the *Supersprint*esque order of the day with *Carnage*. In a similar vein to *International Truck Racing* (elsewhere on this comp'), you get to soup up your vehicle between races with prize money won. In one player mode *Carnage* features one of the most pointless league systems ever seen in a computer game. The player competes in a championship alongside three other drivers with points awarded after each race, four for first place, three for second and so on. 'Fair enough' you cry but here's the really stupid part — you have to finish first to qualify for the next track. In one game I was five points clear in the championship when one small hiccup meant I finished third in the next race, only to be greeted by an infernal 'game over' message. Things improve a little in two-player mode as only one needs to qualify, but it's still annoying. I seem to recall this was received pretty well as a stand-alone release some months back. All I can say is we must have been in a pretty benevolent mood at the time.

64%

WORLD SOCCER

There are three footy management games in the pack — namely *World Soccer*, *Kenny Dalglish* and *Graeme Souness* — but as they're all pretty similar (read: almost identical) I'll talk about the 'best' one.
It's an odd little chap. A soccer game in which you compete as part of a three division league against sixty top sides from around Europe. A laughable 'match' sequence does little to hide the painfully shallow gameplay — basically all you do is buy the odd player and replace team members when they get injured. Watching the match commentary is good for a cringe at first. Seven or eight near-illiterate statements pop up when there's a goal or near miss — Brian Moore would turn in his sweater. Been there, loaded that, won't be playing it tomorrow...

42%

With only two games remotely worth playing (*Tennis* and *Truck Racing*) I can't recommend you part with the cash for this flock of turkeys. Sad, but true.

MILES! 48%

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MANGRAM'S MAIL BAG

It's been a strange month, there's no doubting that. The departure of Chris Hayward to SNES FORCE has helped the office to be a less obscure and strange place. For example, his 'fruit pastille meets trilobite' sculpture's gone, and we've picked up all the Just Fruits off the staircase, but the office just isn't the same, y'know? Gone are his little messages subbed into my letters, but that's not such a bad thing — some of the later ones were a bit strange. Mostly nonsense like 'Tips Section', 'Fire Axe' and 'That Infernal Guttery Fellow'. Anyway, on with the letters — of which there are more this month, due to popular demand...

QUESTIONABLE?

Dear Lloyd,

Your mag is the best but, that aside, I'd like to ask you a few questions.

1) Your Reel Action tapes are great — could you get a *Nobby the Aardvark* demo?

We tend to only include covertape demos around the time a game is actually released. As you'll well know,* Nobby *was reviewed a fair while ago

2) In Issue One you had 14 reviews. In Issue Nine you only had four. Why?

Because in Issue One we had 14 games to review and in Issue Nine we had a mere four. It's not our fault, blame the software houses...

3) What games have been rated 100%?

There's never been a game released that has deserved (or indeed received) a 100% rating. To be honest, I don't think there ever will be.

4) Will there be another *Dizzy* game out?

Not for the C64. It's also likely that, after the conversion of NES* Fantastic Adventures of Dizzy *(a mish-mash of the egg's arcade and arcade adventure games) to other formats, Dizzy may be laid to rest for good. Don't quote me on that though — the ovoid does have remarkable staying power...

5) At Christmas, will you give us three Reel Action tapes instead of two?

Perhaps...

6) Who's Rod?

Miles' brother

Sorry if this letter's a bit long.

Billy Devine, Lordswood, Kent

● *More questions! Could people try and avoid using them as much, please? Why can't we have debates, like we did in the old days, foam gibber...*

LM

LOAD MOAN

Dear Sir,

Why is it that new programs for the C64 are 99% multiload? When I bought my computer back in 1984, there were programs like *Manic Miner, Jet Set Willy, Bruce Lee* — all of which loaded in a single part. Look at the helicopter simulator, *Tomahawk* — all that data loaded in one go. I've not long bought *Robin Hood: Legend Quest*, and once the lives counter reaches zero, you have to rewind the tape to load what's already in the memory. It's daft! Even *F16 Combat Pilot* is another offender — when you crash, it tells you to 'rewind to zero on side A'. Why doesn't it just say 'Turn computer off and load again'? Isn't that essentially what's happening?

When will these C64 programmers get their act together?

Philip Riding, Forest Gate, London.

● *I agree that multiloads are a pain, but sometimes they're essential. Games like* Alien 3 *and* Lemmings *are perfect examples of how, when well thought-out, multiloads can facilitate the inclusion of extra levels, music, presentation... the list is almost endless. I'm not a big fan of prolonged tape accessing myself, but then again, who is? Now if the games were to be released on cartridge...*

LM

NO SALE

Dear Lloyd,

Sorry — I'm an Amiga 500 owner (hopefully soon to be a CD32 owner. Reading Dad?) and I was going to sell my C64 with disk drive. However, while I was playing a game it suddenly stopped working, so now I'm selling everything separate. I took the lot to a car boot sale, where a guy came up to me and said 'do you realise that some early copies of those with tapes are worth £20?'. He was, of course, referring to my old ZZAP!'s that I was flogging for a quid. I immediately stopped selling them.

I don't know if you can understand what I'm getting at, but I'm wondering if these mags are *really* worth something. I've even dug out some old (1986) Your Commodores. So please tell me — are these mags worth anything? Oh, and where can I sell them?

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Thanks for the help — if you help me, that is...
Stuart Winchester, Swansea, West Glamorgan

● *I'm not sure how much old ZZAP!'s are worth — having never attempted to sell mine, I'm not particularly clued-up on the going rates. Like most things, I'd say they're worth as much as the buyer's willing to pay — which, where Your Commodore's concerned, won't be much at all...*
LM

THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

Dear Lloyd thing,
I've got some questions for you:
1) Why do you wear that stupid bag?
Why did you write this stupid letter?
2) How old are you?
Twelve.
3) Erm, I forgot.
That's not a question.
4) Do you thing I should get a disk drive, or 14 tape games?
I can't really say. It's up to you — do you want the short-term gratification, or the long-term investment? Ahh, decisions decisions...
If you don't remove that bag I'll get a meteor to kill you. Ha ha!
Leonard Bentin, St Helens, Merseyside

● *If I don't remove my bag? For some reason, I doubt your meteor-hurling abilities. I'd like to see you try, though...*
LM

QUESTIONABLE? (2)

Dear Lloyd,
Have you any idea where I could get a copy of *Skooldaze*? My friend had a copy ages ago and said it was great. To be original, here are some questions...
1) Is there any chance of *Mortal Kombat* coming out on the C64?
In a nutshell, no.
2) Are there any more versions of *Street Fighter 2* in the pipeline?
Again, no.
3) I know what has happened to Steve Shields, but what the hell has happened to Ian?
He's working for our sister magazine, AMIGA FORCE.
4) Do you know where I can get a copy of ZZAP! 64, Issue One?
Actually, no. They're very hard to find — we've only got one copy ourselves...

You're not going to print this letter — I can sense it...
Stuart Price, Derby

● Skooldaze *was last published by Alternative — give them a ring on 0977 797777 and if they've got any copies, I'm sure they'll be more than pleased to sell you one. And I did print your letter — better get those 'senses' checked out, yes?*
LM

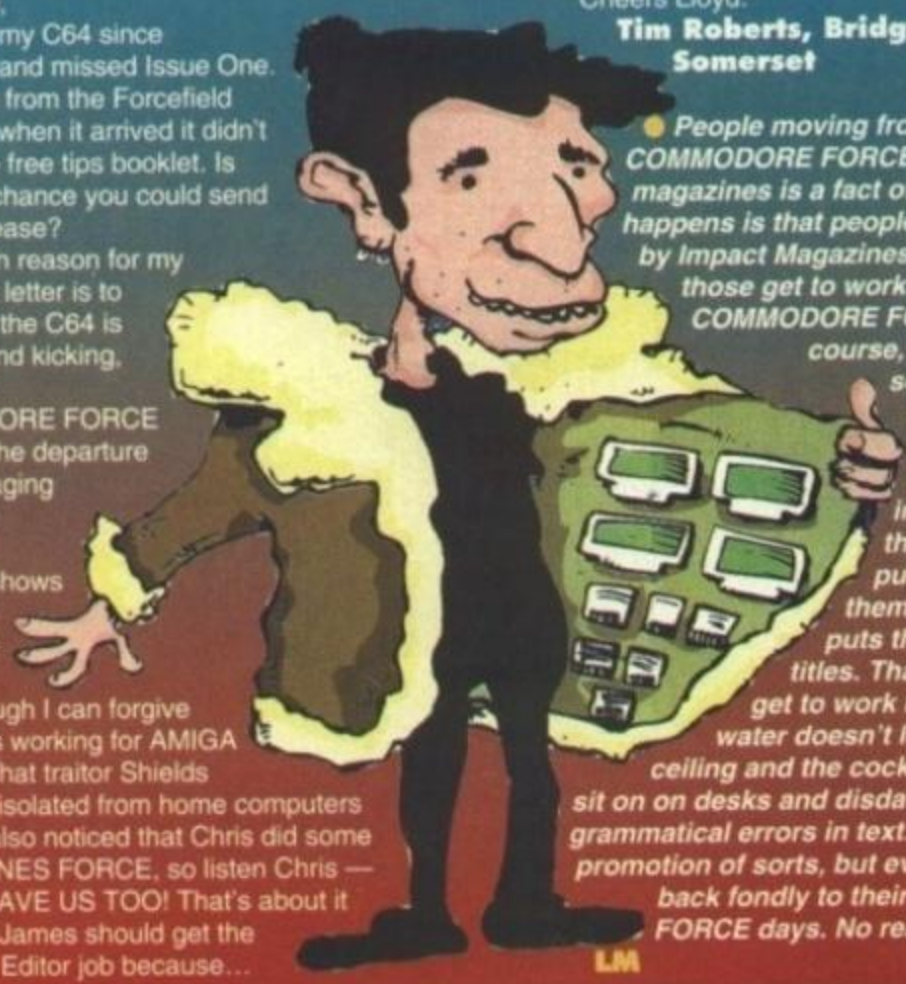
ZZAP! MAD

Dear Lloyd,
The reason for my writing is this: you're the last person left from ZZAP! Who could forget our fresh-faced Robin Hogg or the althletic Phil King? To put the icing on the cake, of course, you were there. I couldn't have asked for anything else at the time!
Here are a few things that I feel would help COMMODORE FORCE.
1) Call it ZZAP! 64.
2) Bring back Rob and Fatty Phil.
3) Bring back the readers' challenge.
Please print this letter to see what response comes from other readers.
Andy 'ZZAPAHOLIC' Hunt, Portsmouth
PS In your questionnaire it says that the first pulled out of the hat will win a mystery prize. How are you going to send it to the winner if you haven't left space for names and addresses? Was it a con to make us send them in? I think we need to know!

● ***Ah, my friend. Nostalgia's one thing, but the days of ZZAP! are long gone, and I think it's time for you to come to terms with that. For a start, they actually had software in those days! Imagine COMMODORE FORCE with 30 games reviewed in an issue! We can but dream...***
The **Microprose Soccer** *readers' challenge will be appearing next issue, and in reply to your questionnaire query, there's a good reason for it. You see, we were testing our readers' intelligence. Would they include their addresses and... oh, what the hell. James forgot to include it in his mad rush to get the issue finished, and apologises for any inconvenience caused. Probably.*
LM

TREACHEROUS DEPARTURES

Dear Lloyd,
I've had my C64 since Christmas and missed Issue One. I ordered it from the Forcefield Plaza, but when it arrived it didn't include the free tips booklet. Is there any chance you could send me one please?
The main reason for my writing this letter is to say that, if the C64 is still alive and kicking, how come COMMODORE FORCE has seen the departure of its Managing Editor and Features Editor? It shows how much faith Steve and Ian had, although I can forgive Ian as he's working for AMIGA FORCE. That traitor Shields should be isolated from home computers forever. I also noticed that Chris did some work for SNES FORCE, so listen Chris — DON'T LEAVE US TOO! That's about it really, but James should get the Managing Editor job because... umm... he's got good hair!
Please print this letter as I've bought every issue of your wondrous mag and I personally will never, ever, buy a console.
Cheers Lloyd.
Tim Roberts, Bridgwater, Somerset



● *People moving from COMMODORE FORCE to other magazines is a fact of life. What happens is that people are employed by Impact Magazines, and some of those get to work on COMMODORE FORCE. Of course, the magazine's so marvellous, they get the best possible training imaginable — that's when the publisher steals them from us and puts them on other titles. That means they get to work in offices where water doesn't leak from the ceiling and the cockroaches don't sit on on desks and disdainfully point out grammatical errors in text. It's a promotion of sorts, but everyone looks back fondly to their COMMODORE FORCE days. No really, they do...*
LM

EXTORTIONATE!

Dear Lloyd,
Congrats on the great mag. I've just go Issue Seven and read Back to the Feature: 1985. I've found that many of the games included are available through EDOS Computer Visions (they advertised in Issue Four), including *Skooldaze* and *Theatre Europe*.
The main reason I'm writing is to comment on the price and availability of C64 games in Oz. It's near impossible to get games on disk and even harder on cassette. For example, *Indy Heat* costs around $50 (£22) at one of Austrailia's largest stockists, yet at AMMA Software in England it costs a mere $10 (£3.99) plus postage.
Anyway, thank you very much for compiling such a great, informative, fun magazine without which I would probably still be paying $50 for a game.
T Bates, Kempsey, Australia

● *Ah, yes. James has been written to time and time again about* **Skooldaze** *and* **Theatre Europe** *being on EDOS — he's got the message now so you can all stop reminding him, okay? I hope you British readers have taken notice of just how hard it is for some people to get C64 software — thank your lucky stars it's not that bad over here...*
LM

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RETROSPECTIVE.

Dear Lloyd

I've been reading your fine publication — in both of its guises — since ZZAP! 64 Issue #45 (which featured a *Robocop* demo and the game *Paralax* on the covertape). ZZAP! was very good but the quality has shot up since then. I saw Maff, Katie and Gordo leave to be replaced with the Hogg man, Fatty Phil and Stu... and many other staff changes, I can tell you.

The best move ZZAP! ever made was to get rid of the Amiga coverage — let's face it, the Amiga users were getting a bit cocky, asking for cover disks and telling C64 users to stop living in the past). Of course, the other C64 publication at the time (CU, to all those of you who don't go back that far) became totally Amiga-orientated after previously promising they'd stay faithful to the C64. Luckily, you didn't do the same, although everyone thought you would...

I was a bit upset when I read an article that said ZZAP! had gone bust, but — thankfully — shortly afterwards you were back and kicking butt. I didn't like the name COMMODORE FORCE at first — for a start you had the same initials as that other C64 mag — and I thought you wouldn't retain ZZAP!'s humour, but you did.

The best thing COMMODORE FORCE ever did was to put some really decent games on the covertapes, such as *Spindizzy* and *The Blues Brothers*. Well done and thank you for a decent C64 magazine.

Ian Burden, Dorchester, Dorset

● ***So many issues... it's been a long time since I started. I don't know how to answer your letter as — well, you haven't asked any questions. Hmmm. Anyway, thanks for the compliments, and keep reading COMMODORE FORCE. What a boring reply...***

No, wait there — I can't be* that *old and stupid. Here goes with the obscurities: TREES TREES, TREES AND BEES, DON'T FORGET TO FEED THE GOATS, blither...

LM

QUESTIONABLE? (3)

Dear Lloyd,

I have three questions that I would like to ask you:

1) I find that I'm unable to get any of the latest games because I don't know where I can get them from. Please help!

Try some of the mail order companies that advertise in COMMODORE FORCE. They're all very reputable and efficient, and have huge back catalogues of C64 stock.

2) In Back to the Feature: 1988 you said that *Tracksuit Manager* is the best football management game on the C64. Where can I get it and how much does it cost?

We're not sure where you can get* Tracksuit Manager *these days — its publishing company (Hi-Tech) ceased trading a few years ago. However, try a few mail-order companies — again, they've got extensive C64 stock, and may just have a copy...

3) Finally, is *Premier Manager* ever going to be released on the C64?

I doubt it very much.

Zoe Barks, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex

THREATENING BEHAVIOUR (2)

Dear Sir,

After being a loyal reader for over five years and a C64 owner for slightly longer, I've seen a rapid decline in '64 shelf space over that period of time. Recently, I've been searching for a game called *Speedball*. As you can imagine, I was horrified when I discovered that Imageworks — its publishing company — had gone bust. My question to you is this; how could it happen? On a final note I'd like to ask you if it's possible to put the aforementioned classic on Reel Action? As far as I know, no-one holds the rights.

PKS the YC fan (not), Somewhere

PS If you don't print this The Scorelord will do VERY NASTY naughty things to you and your bananas. This *is* a threat.

● ***You'll have to shop carefully to find* Speedball *— it's been a long time since it was given shelf space. Sadly, we can't just put games on Reel Action without getting permission from the licence holder — we don't know who currently holds the rights to* Speedball, *so don't expect to see it unless we discover who does. If you're wondering why Imageworks went bust, it's simple — they disappeared under the waves in a fashion subsequent and not dissimilar to their owner, the late Robert Maxwell...***

Anyway, what's the beef with threatening me? That's the second time this month! You couldn't pull it off anyway — James stole the Scorelord's super space-ship computer to plan quick routes to the pub with and replaced it with a Vic 20. The ex-high score guru (and full-time sadist) is currently drifting through the Horse-head Nebula with a flat battery. Or so I'm told — perhaps I should lay off the Bitter for a few days...

LM

GOODBYE, MY FRIEND

Dear Lloyd,

This is probably the last time I'll ever write to you. By the time you read this, I won't be buying COMMODORE FORCE — I am, like so many others, going to upgrade.

I'm not one of those people who would just buy a computer (or a console) for the graphics alone. For instance, when the Super Nintendo came out, everyone dropped their jaws at its 32,000 colours and Mode 7 sprite rotation, when C64 owners did well enough on 16. I was prepared to hold onto my C64 for as long as I could. I was sure it could stand up against all comers...

But then the Spectrum and Amstrads became obsolete, and it now seems the C64 is following suit — rapidly. Take a look at how much software was coming out this month (August at the time of writing) last year, and the year before:

Year	Games Reviewed	Full Price	Budget
'91	35	20	15
'92	15	5	10
'93	4	0	4

See how the situation's changed?

We live in a world set towards graphics. The Amiga 1200 has 16.7 million colours, over a million times more than the C64. So you can see what Joe Soap would want to buy — never mind the price, look at all those colours!

I am, in fact, getting an Amiga 1200, but not for its colours — it's fast, supports some stunning software and appears to be Commodore's new flagship machine (they're flogging A600's for next to nothing and seem to be going 32-bit only). Best wishes, Lloyd.

Paul O'Brien

● ***More doom and gloom. As I've already said, there's a limited amount of software released these days, but a phenomenal amount already available if you shop carefully.***

As for your views on colours, surely people consider more than that? What about the quality of the sound, the availability of software, the standard of the games? People aren't that stupid.

LM

LETTER OF THE MONTH!

THE SPUD WRITES THRICE...

Dear Lloyd,

This is the third letter I've written, so please print it, dude. A year ago I bought a second-hand C64, two joysticks and ten games — the best of those being *Flimbo's Quest*. It was the first game I'd ever played on the C64. One year on and things are improving. Now I've got excellent games like *Creatures*, *Arnie*, *Silent Service*, *Armalyte*, *Myth* and many other classics. The best I've got since then is your mag. To be honest, I owe it to my granny. I asked her to get me Commodore F****T, but she accidentally got

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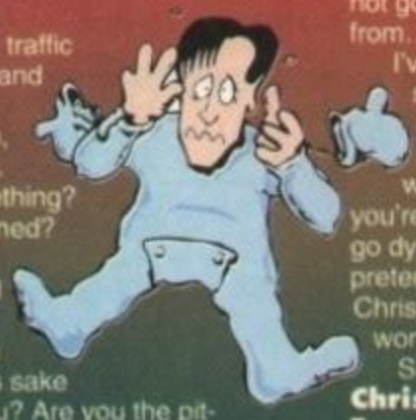
WHO THE HELL'S CHRIS HAYWARD?

Dear Lord Moontram

I was stuck in a traffic jam the other day and guess what happened? No go on, guess what happened. What are you lazy or something? Go on guess what happened? Oh, so it's like that is it? I write in a letter and what do you do? Go on, say what you do? Oh for heavens sake you're the pits. Are you? Are you the pit-stop in the World Grand Prix? My that is an accomplishment. What's it like having Formula 1 cars driving over you...? I asked you a question.



What's it like having Formula 1 cars driving over you? So you're not going to answer? Well two can play at that game (the game in question being chess but four people can play Ludo!), I'm not going to speak for five years starting from... from... now!The trouble is I'm writing a letter and I've now wasted five whole years sitting in silence brooding. I'm now considerably older and have forgotten the address to post this letter to. Still, you'll never guess what? No go on, guess. Oh, after all this time you're still not ready to hold a conversation. Well, go dye your head. Go on, dye it glossy green and pretend to be Grotbags in an upcoming Christmas pantomime. I bet you five pounds you won't — slacker.

Sick and tired of being sick and tired

Chris Hayward
Former Mad Fool of Commodore Fore

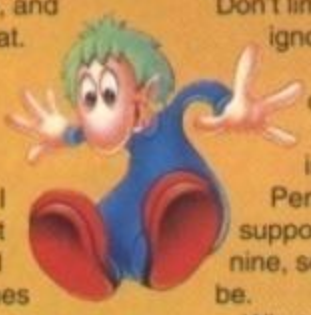
● ***????!!!!***

LM

DOOM, GLOOM AND CONDEMNATION

Dear Lloyd,

I've been a C64 owner (and loyal ZZAP!/COMMODORE FORCE reader) for almost seven years now, but, having saved the cash, I'm getting an Amiga 1200. That's not to say I'll be deserting my C64 — far from it. The 100+ titles I own have given me years of pleasure, and I'm not about to ditch them just like that. I've no doubt I'll buy *Mayhem in Monsterland* for my C64, but after that I reckon I'll be saving my cash for things like *Hired Guns* and *Sensible Soccer* for my 16-bit buddy. I would have bought '64 *Lemmings*, but I'll get Amiga *Lemmings 2* instead — I think the Amiga's better suited to games like that, don't you?



Anyway, I know you're above all the whining, but I've no doubt that, should you print this letter, you'll get loads of letters complaining about what I've said. Well, to anticipate their rantings: up yours, you trainspotters. What's wrong with having two computers? The C64's a great machine, but in terms of software it's had its day. How many new games do you see released these days? Naff all, that's how many. After Christmas, I reckon COMMODORE FORCE won't have any reviews — simply because there'll be no software to review. Other computers aren't minor demons, everyone — they're simply other ways of enjoying yourself. Don't limit yourself to the C64 alone — they say ignorance is bliss, but, having read your letters pages with some of the ludicrous rantings of your readers, I'd basically say: 'if you're talking about C64 owners, then ignorance is standard'. Oh well...

Perhaps it's just your younger readers. I suppose I am a bit long in the tooth at twenty-nine, so perhaps I'm not as in touch as I used to be.

What a long letter! Sorry about that Lloyd. I'm looking forward to seeing a response from you...

Chris Andrews, Kent

PS Don't worry, I'll still be buying COMMODORE FORCE. Your Reel Action cassettes are ruddy marvellous, guys — keep up the good work...

● ***Strong words, Chris — while I agree with certain points you've made, is there any real need to condemn loyal C64 users by naming them 'trainspotters'? Or, for that matter, accusing them of ignorance? Each computer format has its strengths, and yes — to dismiss them is a little short-sighted. As for your prediction of doom and gloom in the C64 software market... well, I can't deny that there's a lack of games on the horizon. However, with the C64's remarkable software base, is it really the end? I think not. There's so much available through EDOS, mail order or, of course, COMMODORE FORCE Reel Action that there are games enough for any user to buy a new piece of software every week for the next two years. And, before anyone stands to correct me, I really don't think that figure's far wrong.***

Everyone feel free to write in and air views, though...

LM

COMMODORE FORCE instead. It's the best mistake she's ever made! Now for some questions:

1) I played *Starfox* on the SNES. Why are there no curved lines?

If by curved lines you mean the absence of the traditional 'vector' graphics, that's because* Starfox *(or* Starwing *as the official English release version is know) has graphics made up of shaded polygons. Hope that makes things a bit clearer...

2) And while I'm at it, why is there no playability? ***It's all graphics and no trousers, that's why.***

3) What's your fave racer?

Stunt Car Racer — ***it's a masterpiece***

4) I nearly always pay £4 for your mag. It may be brill, but why so dear?

I always get paid peanuts for my work on each issue. It may be rewarding work, but why so little financial comeback?

5) How do mail order companies manage to sell full-price games cheaper than they are in the shops?

Less overheads. Shops are expensive, you know...

6) Weren't you a bit hard on *Street Fighter 2*? I think it's cool.

Ahh, but it could have been so much better. Look at* IK+ *and see what I mean. If US Gold had got a talented programming team working on a cartridge-only* Street Fighter 2... *who knows, it could have been excellent.

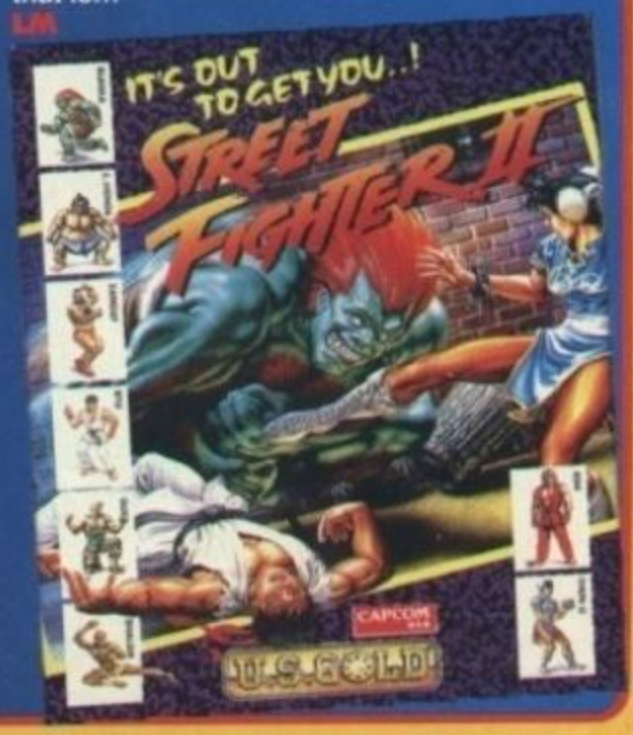
I'd just like to tell everyone just how brilliant *Super Seymour* is. It deserves 100%. *Super Seymour has the best loading screen ever. Super Seymour* also has the best music ever... fact. Long live the C64!

John 'Spud' Crotty, Co Waterford, Ireland

● ***So you like* Super Seymour *then?***

As this is the third time you've written — and you've asked a few interesting questions — a mystery prize is winging its way to you right now. If we can find your full address, that is...

LM



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COMPANY COMPARISONS

Dear Lloyd,

First off I'd just like to say how excellent COMMODORE FORCE is, especially the games. Anyway, I thought I'd do a round-up of the most popular software houses and what I think of them. How about if other readers could do it as well so COMMODORE FORCE could have a 'favourite software houses' chart? Here's my view:

OCEAN

They've given us many a classic game, and are probably the biggest software company going. However, the majority of their movie conversions have been platform shooters.

8/10

US GOLD

They're responsible for the conversions of a fair few arcade classics, such as *Street Fighter 2*. Let's just say they don't do a very good job...

6/10

SYSTEM 3

The best C64 software company, or they were — I think they've gone bust...

9/10

BEYOND BELIEF

Honestly, if the C64 market is to get better we don't need these guys.

2/10

CODEMASTERS

Dizzy. Seymour. Cute platformers. Dizzy. Seymour. Cute platformers. Come on, enough is enough...

4/10

ZEPPELIN

Loads of releases, very few classics.

4/10

THALAMUS

A great company, responsible for some of the best games around — the name *Creatures 2* springs to mind.

9/10

MICROPROSE

The kings of the sims.

7/10

Now it's questions time (please answer them, as they're only small).

1) What's happened to the following games: *Fly Harder, Dyna Blaster, Bee 52, Fuzzball, Mega Twins, Beavers* and *Speedball 2*?

I thought you said they were small questions! Oh well, here goes...

Fly Harder *is produced by a foreign company who we've heard nothing from since we received the game, so a review's out of the question until we know whether it's being released, how much it will cost and, um, get another copy of the game because we've lost our original one.* Dyna Blaster*? I assume that's available at retail level. To the best of my knowledge, it* was *released. If you can't find it, try Kingsoft's* Bug Bomber *— they're very similar, but* Bomber *has a better one-player mode.* Bee 52 *should be in the shops shortly — I couldn't say exactly when — and* Fuzzball*'s been out for ages, or so I'm told.* Mega Twins*? Never heard of it.* Beavers *won't be released on the C64, and finally,* Speedball 2 *apparently disappeared following the collapse of the Maxwell empire that just happened to include its publishing company, Imageworks. Phew! Is that the longest in-question answer yet?*

2) Are there any C64 games like Nintendo's *Probotector*?

I asked SNES FORCE's Will Evans (the goth kid — 'In Joke' Ed) about Probotector*, and he, being an ex-C64ster himself, recommended Imagine's* Gryzor *— apparently, the two games are very similar, to the point of being almost identical in places.*

3) How about putting *The Last Ninja* on the covertapes?

We'll see...

Keep up the good work

Darren Langran, Dagenham, Essex

● *You had to ruin it, didn't you! After the interesting start to the letter — ie you didn't moan about consoles — the addition of questions at the end of it all put you back down on everyone else's level. System 3 haven't gone bust by the way — they're concentrating on SNES product, and are unlikely (read: not) to consider releasing any more C64 software. Sad but true.*

LM

SNIPS

CHOICE BLENDS SELECTED FROM FINEST GROUND LETTERS

I'm not mad, really. I just appear this way to confuse my apricots.

Daniel Gurney, Kinlet

● *They do look pretty confused...*

LM

Get some female staff writers — they'll add sex appeal to the mag.

Richard Parsons, Bromsgrove

● *We're sex incarnate as it is. Any more 'sex appeal' and we'll probably be illegal.*

LM

What's 'Chart Chatter'? I'm confused!

Jo Smith, Worcestershire

● *You're not the only one! Thank god it's finished...*

LM

PUNY

Dear Lloyd,

I used to own a C16 +4 until it packed up from over-use. I was wondering if I can get *Mister Puniverse* or *Squirm* for the C64, because they're my favourite games. I'd also like to say that your adventure and public domain sections are rubbish.

Hope you can help

Derek Ley, Pentrechwyh, Swansea

● *Sorry, but I've not seen or heard anything of the two games you mentioned — although I must say that their names do lend themselves to a 'ones to avoid' category or two. Okay, so you think our adventure and PD sections are rubbish, but you didn't say why. Constructive criticism is always welcome, but we do like to know where we're going wrong — if you don't tell us, we can't do anything about it, hmm? Oh, congratulations — your signature is the worst one we've seen other than Miles'. To come even close is an achievement and a half.*

LM

'All good things must come to an end'. Who was it who said that? Whoever did deserves to have a toilet roll shoved up their nose, as it's a particularly depressing thought.

Sure, it's the end of Mangram's Mailbag for this month, but next issue's letter-orientated section is mere weeks away from being with you. And as my father said, 'the anticipation of having something is almost as pleasurable as the actual having' — obviously, that doesn't apply to P45's, so I'd better stop my drivelling now. Send your letters — be they big, small or oddly-shaped — to Mangram's Mailbag, Impact Magazines, COMMODORE FORCE, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.

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DIARY OF A

Okay, so the Diary of a Game feature's been going for a while now, but this is most definitely a first — a double-game diary. Jon Wells — programmer of *Sceptre of Baghdad* and our very own *Easy Lives* — is currently writing two potentially excellent budget games — *Escape from Arth*, and *City Bomber*. Perhaps we'd better let him tell you about it himself...

This particular diary's slightly different to the usual. Why? Well, simply because it'll feature two games instead of one — phew! All programming, graphics and sound effects are being done by myself — Jon — with music by Paul Hannay, also known as The Feekzoid.

I always start my games with the graphics as er... what am I saying, I haven't even explained the initial ideas yet! So, first we start with the game's design and ideas. One of these, *Escape From Arth*, is already half-completed, the other's *City Bomber* which we're just starting.

Arth's a run-around flick-screen shoot-'em-up set in a maze from which you must find means of escape, before the planet explodes. You take control of two different robots called Voto and Veti. *City Bomber*, on the other hand, is a horizontally scrolling bomb-'em-up. The idea of this (If you haven't already guessed) is to destroy the cities on progressively tricky levels. The neat things about this one is that it'll include simultaneous two-player action, with fast parallax scrolling and featuring loads of new colours never before seen on a C64!

Arth is flick scrolling, with each screen near full size. There are going to be over 50 screens altogether, and at that size I just can't plonk them in the memory one after the other, as I'd only be able to fit about 62 screens into 64k — what a waste of memory. No, instead a screen editor is in order; so each screen can be compacted or retrieved from memory.

This is where the first part of the programming came in, to create an object editor. This little baby enables us to make the different pieces of background graphics needed to build up each screen, trees, doors, buildings etc. Each one can then be stored separately in memory. I use Datel's Action Replay to do all my coding on. 'Aaarrrhhh!' I hear you mumble, but seriously, a lot of programmers seem to criticise the old Action Replay, saying it's almost impossible to code with. Sure it's difficult at first, but once you get to grips with it you can produce stuff pretty quickly, believe me!

Anyway, where was I... oh that's it — at this point I could start on some background graphics to test the editor. I always do the graphics 'n' sprites on Firebird's Graphic Editor, as this allows you to test them on-screen. Once I'd done a few test graphics I tried them in the editor and everything worked fine. Now I must do the actual Screen Editor. This allows us to plot each object on a defined screen, building the picture bit by bit just like in Rainbow (though personally I don't watch it!). You know — the part where a sketch is made with big chunks of....

Once a screen is made you can store it with the touch of a button. The editor took a couple of weeks to construct but it's all finished now, and was well worth it! One good thing that's come out of all this is that I can use it with future games — good eh? The background graphics have been drawn, albeit roughly at the moment — I'll update them later. Some graphics include large transformers and various other electrical pipelines which should, hopefully, look quite neat once updated. Using the editor to build the backdrops was a doddle, and a lot quicker than by hand — all were completed in two four hour stints over the keyboard. And that's not all — memory-wise, the screens only take up about 6k and remember, there's well over 50!

Vote Sprite for President...

I've now started on the sprites for *Arth*. These are comprised of the 'Z' robots, Vote the male robot and Veti the girly! The basic frames of each robot are the same, apart from Veti's head, sporting long flowing hair as she runs. One problem I had was with shooting. When the player fires a laser normally, it zooms straight across the screen, but if you just happen to be aiming upward then it needs to bend into a 45-degree angle as it goes. For this I had to construct two laser style sprites — the first

● **Escape From Arth, though why you should want to I don't know — nice, blue sky and what an attractive tree.**

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with left and right fire, the second with up left and up right.

And now for the enemies — after all, what's a game without the enemies! I had a few ideas for these, but for the moment I've opted for the following; Robot droid (Ground mover), Robot ball (bouncy bouncy!), RFO 1 (Low flyer) and RFO 2 (High flyer). The Robot Objects will also be able to fire random twist missiles, so with these in mind I set to work creating them!

Now that the majority of sprites and backgrounds are completed it's time to start putting things together. The main part's the screen and player detection routines — the controls go something like this; joystick left and right to move, down to enter a passageway and up to shoot beam laser. Also if you push up and left or right when you fire, the laser will bend and zoom upwards.

The on-screen collisions come next as each screen must be linked together and we don't want the player walking through impassable walls now, do we? Once this is over the fun begins. It's all starting to take shape now, and getting more playable. I've put the baddies in but at the moment they re-appear when you leave and re-enter the room — a random enemy routine is needed to sort this out. This will be programmed in later!

Enough of *Arth* for now — I think it's about time I got started on some *City Bomber* work!

Bombs away! I'm not too sure about the ethical angle on this one — bombing civilians in their homes. Still, it's fun!

Get Bombed...

As this is a horizontal scroller, a new style or editor is needed. Each city will be at least six screens in length and one high, so bearing this in mind I've come up with a cunning idea! I could build 30 levels out of five normal levels of scrolling memory. The first five levels would then be one screen long, levels six to ten would be the same as the first five but two screens and so on, up to six screens. Using this technique I can make hundreds of levels in small amounts of memory!

First I must program the new Object Editor only this time there's going to be a restriction on the size of each object. At the most buildings and other happenings can be no bigger than an axe characters grid, but bigger buildings can always be linked together with two or more eight-by-eight objects. More test graphics were then drawn to utilise this before sorting out the scrolling routines. Eventually I got a small demo up and running. Each character can be literally any colour, as the scroller scrolls the character colours as well. The screen is now updated every 50th of a second, with all scrolling intact and the scroll data being grabbed from a large wide window stored in memory. The good thing about using this effect is that I can make the screen scroll at almost any speed. As an example, most games run at 1 or 2 pixels every 50th — as in SEUCK games — but in *City Bomber* I can make it scroll at 8, 16, 64, 128 pixels every 50th or even faster if I wish! At these speeds, the screen scrolls so fast that you can't even keep up with it! Well, I couldn't anyway.

It won't surprise you then if I tell you that there's definitely going to be a speed option on the title screen so everybody can witness the incredible pace...

Remember those new colours I was on about earlier? The C64 has 16 colours normally, right? Wrong! Using a special technique which I call RASTER COLOUR MIXING (RCM for short), you can have a possible 58 different colours (yes, 58!) on screen at once, and in any character colour. In *City Bomber*, though, we'll only be using about 30. Now the scrolling's sorted it's time to work on the parallax effects. These consist of the mountains, trees, hills and buildings which form the landscape behind the main city, but scrolling slightly slower. After this are the clouds of day-time and stars for night. Altogether there's now five layers of parallax and it looks quite neat.

The top and bottom borders have also been opened with the score and time limits at the bottom, and the rest of the play area (which now looks huge) at the top. I've just managed to finish the first player's ship and it's all moving about fine!

Stay tuned until next month, when we'll see the completion of the *City Bomber* landscape editor, the in game music/effects and maybe, just maybe, the completion of both games (And a covertape demo or two, Jon? — Ed). Bye!

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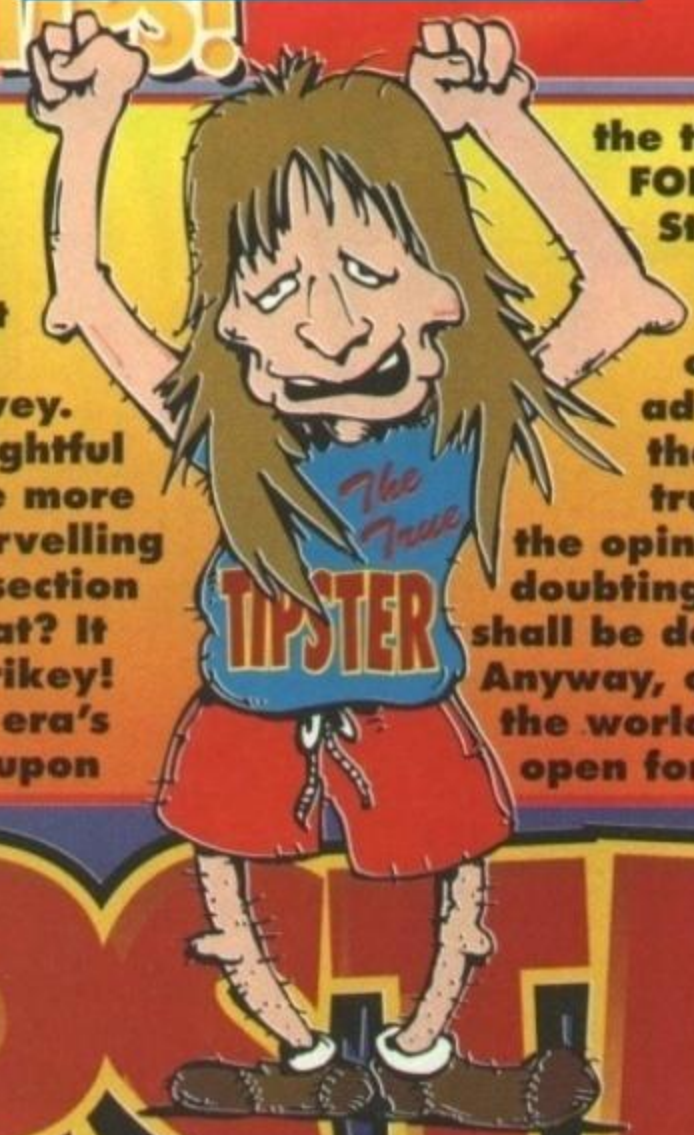
HEEELLLOOOOOO EVERYBODY — Tis me, the new Tipster. For verily I have vanquished the foul beast Hayward and now sit proud upon his throne, master of all the tips I survey. How proud to occupy my rightful place at last. It seems little more than a month ago I sat marvelling at the thought of a whole section to myself and ya know what? It *was* only a month ago — crikey! So a new era's dawned upon the the fabled COMMODORE FORCE tips department. Strangely, some people seem to think I'm some kind of power-crazy megalomaniac obsessed with personal advancement no matter what the cost to anybody else. Not true! I have utmost regard for the opinions of others, and anyone doubting my honourable intentions shall be dealt with very severely. Anyway, on that light note I decree the world's greatest tips festival open for business once more.



THE TIPSTER!

DAN DARE

Issue Ten's excellent covertape adventure featuring that most famous and intrepid of space explores, Daniel Dare, can be a little tricky to get into. Well no longer need you lose any sleep over thoughts of the evil Mekon and his hordes overrunning our fair planet. Just keep this comprehensive solution to hand, and you'll see him off in no time.

GENERAL PLAY

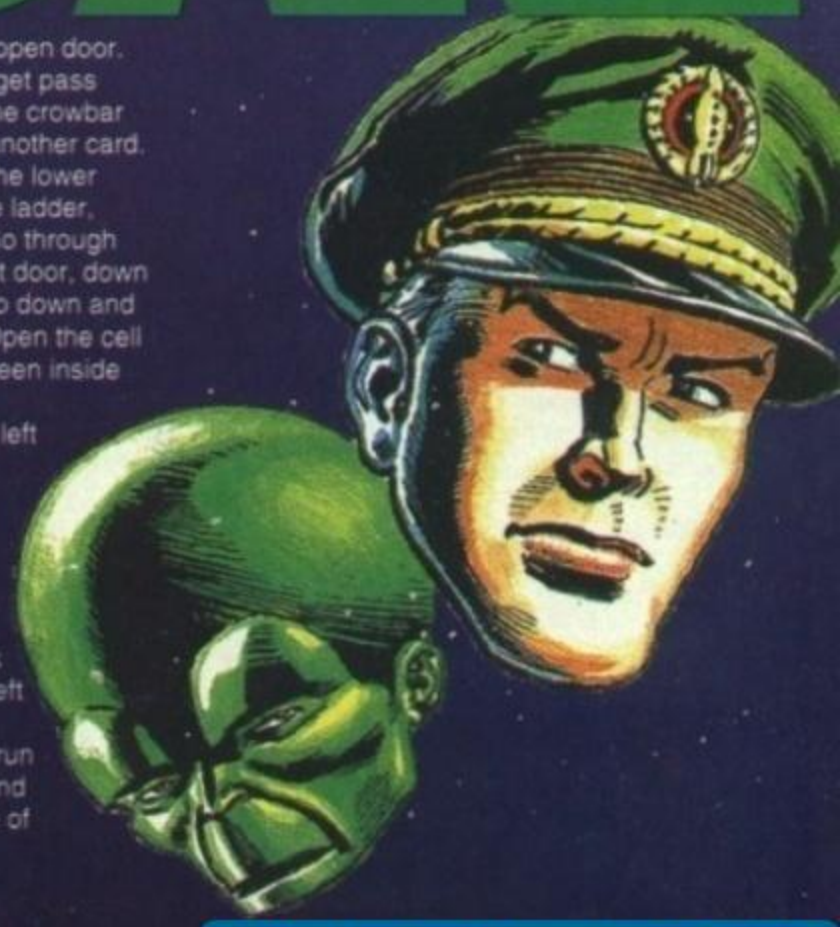
Time is of the essence. You have twenty-five minutes to complete the game and believe me, you'll need every second. Avoid contact with Treen guards if at all possible. For one thing, fighting uses up time and secondly, you'll need as much energy as possible for your confrontation with the mighty Mekon. Some fights, however, are unavoidable. Should you need to partake in a scuffle the best method is to hold down fire with the joystick pushed up in the direction of your opponent. Dan will repeatedly punch to the head. A little energy may be lost, but that's unavoidable.

UNDERGROUND COMPLEX

On entering the Treen base you'll find yourself on a gantry with three ladders. Climb down any one of these and walk left through the open door. Fight the Treen guard and you should get pass card. Open the door on the left using the crowbar and walk through. Fight the Treen for another card. Now go down the ladder and through the lower right door avoiding the guard, down the ladder, through left door and fight the Treen. Go through left door, down the ladder, through right door, down again and right. Fight the Treen then go down and left and you should be in a cell room. Open the cell door using a pass card and fight the Treen inside to rescue the professor.

Next go right, up the ladder, through left door where you're confronted by a locked door. Open it using a pass and enter. There's no lights in here so use the torch to find your way about. Go down the ladder. Down again and open Digby's cell with a pass. Fight the Treen inside to free him. Then back up into the dark room and keep going left 'til you reach the laser...

NB — if at any poirlt you find you've run out of pass cards, find a Treen guard and fight him. Most will furnish you with one of these useful items when defeated.



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CAVES

Miake sure you remember the location at which you start, as it's to here you must return at the end of the game. As soon as you appear, go left across the surface of the planet until you arrive on a screen with a Treen patrolling (location two) then duck down the open hatch to avoid fighting him (you'll need your energy later). Go right to the bottom of the ladder until you're in the water then left and cut off the reeds. Use reeds as a snorkel to swim left until a message pops up telling you you've hit something. Pick it up — jingo, it's a crowbar! Now swim right to location eight and open the hatch. Now back to six, up the ladder, left and up again. You should be in location one with a locked hatch to the left. Open this using the crowbar and go down. Walk left to find yourself in the main cave complex.

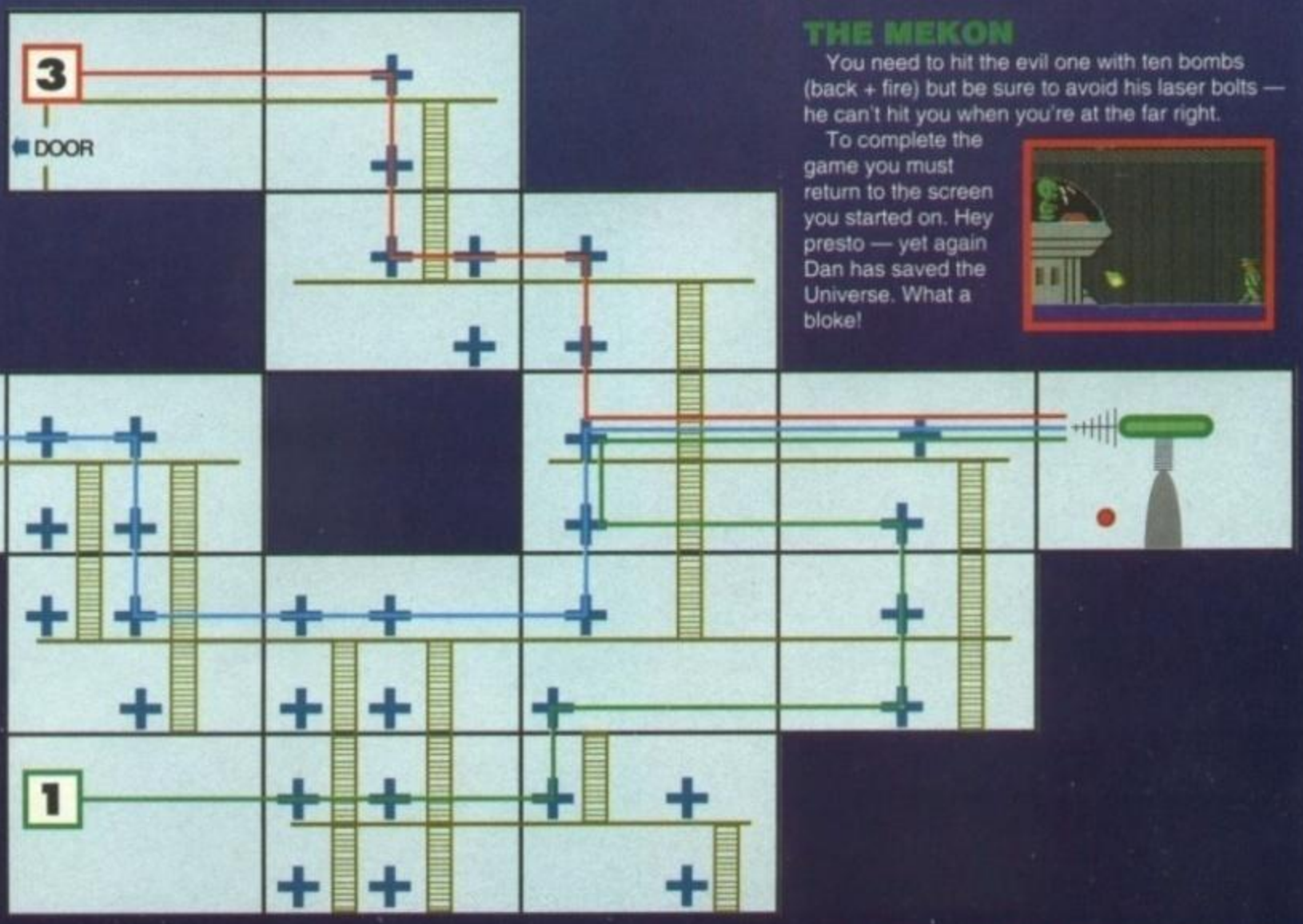
Go down and across to location 17 and collect the branch then return to 14 and use it to open the hatch (it's electrified so you can't use the metal crowbar without getting frazzled).

Make your way to location 12 and cut down the left-hand vine. Tie it onto the right and climb down. Open the hatch then walk right and collect the fruit. Go back up into the lower level of location ten and throw the fruit through the narrow gap. Stripey will fetch it and return bearing the torch — what a helpful fellow.

Go back to the vine room (location 12) and down the hatch you opened earlier. The room's black so turn on the torch. Get the oil can from the bottom left of the screen then go back up and right across the top platform into room 16 where you'll find another hatch use the oil on it then pull it open and climb down. You'll find yourself in the Treen base. On room five the letter 'A' exit will take to the 'A' on room 14.

MAZE OF MIRRORS

See diagram below. Remember — the terminals must be destroyed in numerical order. Align the appropriate mirrors then go back and press the button. After the third computer is destroyed the door just below it and to the left will open. This leads into the Mekon's lair.



THE MEKON

You need to hit the evil one with ten bombs (back + fire) but be sure to avoid his laser bolts — he can't hit you when you're at the far right.

To complete the game you must return to the screen you started on. Hey presto — yet again Dan has saved the Universe. What a bloke!

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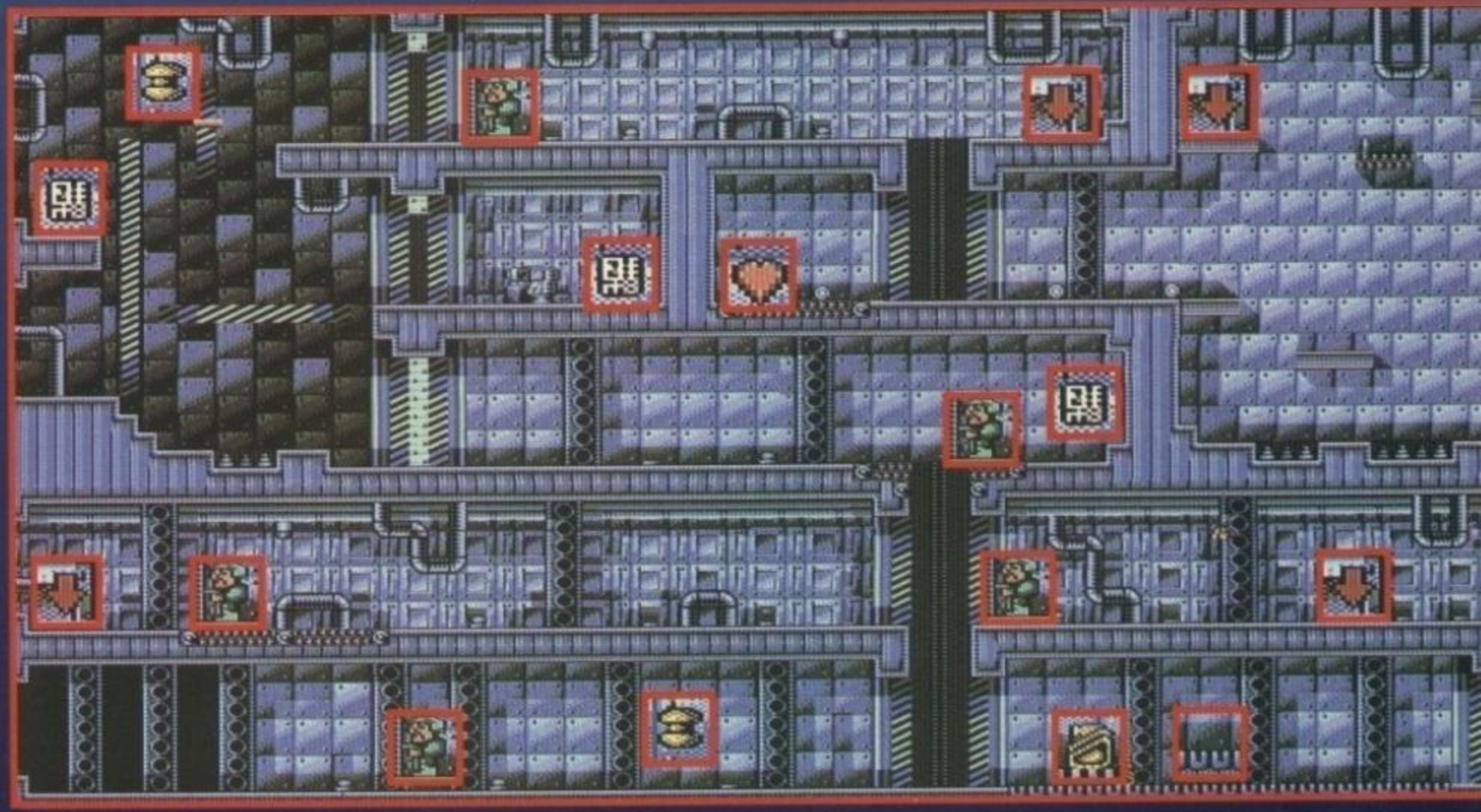
SUBURBAN C

KEYCARDS
Collect cards to open doors. Don't worry about getting them in any order, as any card unlocks any door. You can carry as many as you want.

BOMB (Primed)
When activated the bomb will look like this.

BOMB (Unprimed)
To open the level exit you need to find all seven detonators (shown by a red arrow). Walk over them to activate them.

Love him or loathe him, you just can't ignore that infernal Hulk of Hogan. Loud, brash, arrogant and peroxide blond — but enough about James. Allow your eyes to graze upon this juicy map and solution to level two.



ROBOT TRACK
Patrol robots can only travel on these tracks. Unfortunately the Hulkster's feet stick to it, meaning he's unable to jump. Wait at the edge until the robot turns its back, then jump behind it and do a leg sweep.

ROBOTS
Use the slide kick to dispose of these. They need a special track to run on and won't sense you until you stand on it.

ENERGY
Tops your energy bar up to maximum.

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COMMANDO

FLYING ROBOTS

Bearing a startling resemblance to hamburgers, these little nasties are best avoided. Once scrolled off screen they won't follow you unless you retrace your steps. Just remember where they are.

GUARDS

One punch will do 'em, but move quickly. They have multi-directional fire and an annoying ability to shoot through walls and closed doors.

END OF LEVEL GUARDIAN

Your final adversary. To beat him, wait until he jumps then jump away, duck down and use the leg sweep. Only punch in an emergency as it leaves you open to attack.

EXTRA LIFE

Answers on a postcard, please...

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REEL RESET

Not only do we give you the hottest freebies in the known universe, but we help you to beat 'em as well, or at least Atherton's Carl Dickinson does. Here are his selection of reset pokes for some of those cover classics — Carl, you're on...

Holiday <None>Cops (RA7)
POKE 21600, 96 — Indestructibility
SYS 16965

Artura (RA9)
POKE 53070, 96 — Infinite energy
SYS 32768

Blue Encounter (RA12)
POKE 21600, 96 — Indestructibility
SYS 16965

Frantic (RA14)
POKE 20224, 96 — Infinite energy
POKE 36841, 173
SYS 49152

Brix (RA14)
POKE 7111, 173 — Infinite balls
SYS 4300

Tracer (RA14)
POKE 4552, 173 — Lives
POKE 4680, 173 — Freeze time
POKE 5464, 0 — Indestructibility
SYS 28672

The next lot require the presence of an action replay cart, inserted in your machine...

H.A.T.E. (RA8)
POKE 59605, 96 — Indestructibility

Park Patrol (RA15)
POKE 58474, 173 — Infinite lives

Rampage (RA15)
POKE 40034, 96 — Infinite energy

Blues Brothers (RA17)
POKE 11350, 189 — Infinite lives

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Never let it be said we don't admit when we're wrong, because we never are — well, not often anyway (cough — Ed). Unfortunately a grave error appeared in last months tips which I shall now endeavour to rectify. Remember a spiffy little cheat for *New Zealand Story*? Well there was a small error, but not in the cheat itself — it works fine if you're playing *Strider*! That's right — Issue 11's *NZS* cheat is in fact a *Strider* cheat. Sorry about that. However, to avert any Kiwi-calamities here's Alex Joliffe's listing for the aforementioned, and it works, honest...

```
0   REM NZS CHEAT BY ALEX JOLIFFE
1   FOR X=384 TO 413 : READ Y :
    C=C+Y : POKE X, Y : NEXT
2   IF <> 3156 THEN PRINT "DATA
    ERROR" : END
3   POKE 157, 128 : SYS 384
4   DATA 032, 086, 245, 169, 032, 141,
    084, 003
5   DATA 169, 147, 141, 085, 003, 169,
    001, 141
6   DATA 086, 003, 096, 072, 169, 173,
    141, 143
7   DATA 012, 104, 173, 032, 208, 096
```

FRUITBANK

Anyone with a reset cart might like to try this out. It's not a cheat — just reset and type SYS 38400, then sit back and watch...

MYTH

Hello Patrick Needham from Shrewsbury, hi, alright? Yes everybody, it's the turn of the great Pat as he shares with us his cheat for that most mysterious of arcade adventures — *Myth*. From the Norse Legends levels onwards, hit keys [A] and [?] simultaneously for full weaponry.

NIGHTSHIFT

Is the Beast with the least giving you grief? Take heart my friend, for here are some passwords to access later levels (namely 11 to 20).

11	BANANA/PINEAPPLE/CHERRY/PLUM
12	CHERRY/PLUMB/BANANA/PLUM
13	PLUM/CHERRY/BANANA/PINEAPPLE
14	PINEAPPLE/CHERRY/PLUM/BANANA
15	PLUM/PLUM/PINEAPPLE/PINEAPPLE
16	BANANA/BANANA/PINEAPPLE/ BANANA
17	BANANA/PLUM/CHERRY/ PLUM
18	PLUM/LEMON/ LEMON/PLUM
19	LEMON/ PINEAPPLE/ CHERRY/PLUM
20	CHERRY/ PINEAPPLE/ PINEAPPLE/ CHERRY

Gadzooks — all this talk of fruit leaves me strangely ill at ease...

ROBOCOP 2

Sadly the failure of C64 cartridge leaves us merely pondering what could have been. Even so, the format spawned one or two true greats — not least *Robocop 2*.

Andy Gray of Cheltenham's got the game well 'n' truly licked and has a little tip for lesser mortals out there. At the start of level five, go to the left edge of the screen and pull down on the joystick to enter a secret slidey-puzzle sub-game. Complete it and you'll gain two extra lives, not to mention one million (how many?) bonus points.

Today the tips section, tomorrow the world! Hayward's column is truly mine, that and all it contains. Of course the process of domination weaves a meandering course of which only time will tell. Nevertheless, one day COMMODORE FORCE shall be in my hands and then... who knows? James is too powerful at the moment but I mean to bring down his tyranny from within — tips are merely the beginning. To aid in my preparation I urge you, my followers, help me grow strong. Bestow upon me ravenous hordes of tips that I might grasp my destiny. Pledge your allegiance to: The True Tipster, COMMODORE FORCE, Impact Magazines, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW. Now where's that snivelling Mangram character hiding...?

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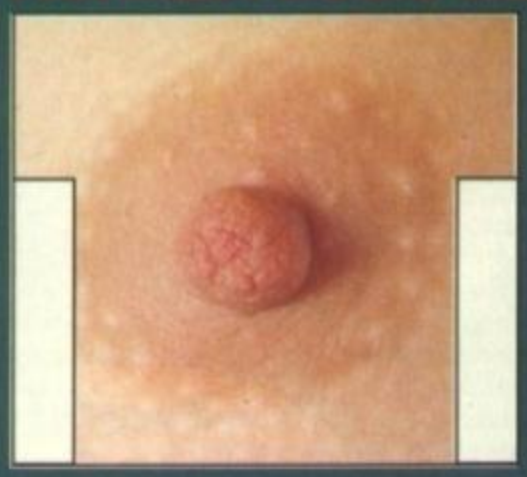

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THE MIGHTY BRIAN!

You've heard of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night — well this is COMMODORE FORCE's Twelfth Issue! Yes, that's 12 months trouble-shooting and problem-solving for all of our loyal readers. Let's get those mail sacks emptied and those bad tempers put away... help has arrived!

G'DAY SPORT

Dear Brian,

1) How can I find cheats for infinite time and energy on games with my Action Replay cart? If I can't, how does the Tipster find them? What hardware/software does he use?

2) Is it possible to insert your own sprites into games and delete the original ones?

Rob Green, Victoria, Australia

● *Let's deal with these problems one at a time..*

1) You can use the POKEFINDER of your Action Replay cart. If the time or energy is a value less than 255, follow this procedure.

i) Start the game

ii) Press the cart button, enter POKEFINDER and type in the value of the time/energy as a number.

iii) Resume the game, lose some time or energy

iv) Re-enter POKEFINDER, and enter the new value of the time/energy.

v) If everything's gone to plan, you should now have infinite time/energy.

What the cartridge does is search the memory for all locations containing the current value (which you entered) and the locations that change it. It also keeps a list of the places it's found. When you go back a second time, it checks that list of locations to see if they hold the new value. If one does, then it alters the instructions to stop it decreasing the value of time/energy and tells you a location in memory to change the next time you want to cheat. By the way, the Tipster gets his POKEs by getting well-meaning readers to do all his work for him, before sitting back and taking all the credit!

2) I could tell you, but it'd be breaking copyright rules (really? — Ed). It seems unfair too, after programmers and graphic artists have sweated blood to bring you those spirites...

Brian

LOADSAPROBLEMS!

Dear Brian,

How do I display a screen while a main program is being loaded in BASIC? What lines do I need to add to the program? I have programs on tape — will I need to re-number them?

AR Hill, Luton, Bedfordshire

● *This is a common question, so a more advanced version of this technique will be appearing in machine code in the near future.*

Add the following lines to a BASIC program — it will display a message anywhere on screen other than the top six lines.

```
65000 PRINT"[HOME]LOAD"CHR$(34)"PROGRAM"CHR$(34)", 1"
65010 POKE631,19:POKE632,13
65020 POKE631,82:POKE632,117:POKE633,13
65030 POKE198,5:END
```

After displaying the screen, GOTO 65000 will load 'program' from tape to RUN it automatically by storing characters in the keyboard buffer. Clever isn't it? Make sure that PLAY is pressed before you GOTO this routine or it won't work properly.

Brian

A DISK-USSION OF A SERIOUS NATURE

Dear Brian,

1) I have tried formatting Maxwell MD2-D disks with the commands printed in Issue Six, but the drive stops after a few seconds and flashes its error light. Have they been properly formatted?

2) I cannot save my work from Mini Office 2 onto these disks; it just comes up with save failed. Is there something wrong with my disk drive?

3) Where can I get printer ribbons for my MPS 803 dot matrix printer?

Robert Tite, Somewhere

● *Here we go again....*

1) Try entering this command:

```
OPEN 15,8,15, "NO DISK,AA":CLOSE15
```

If that doesn't work, make sure the write protect notch on the right-hand side of the disk is open, and you're inserting the disk with this notch on the right.

2) If the command in Issue Six or the one above doesn't work, the disk isn't properly formatted and Mini Office 2 cannot save to it. If you're absolutely certain something is still wrong, I suggest you check out the adverts and find a repair company.

3 Contact Omnidale Supplies who advertise regularly in Commodore Force; they have MPS 801 and 803 ribbons available.

Brian

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MACHINE CODE DOWN UNDER

Dear Brian,

1) My dad bought the Power Cartridge — it has a monitor. Is this a suitable assembler to write games?

2) How long would you think it would take for a 14-year-old to learn machine code?

3) How do you expect overseas readers to enclose a self-addressed envelope? Send a cheque for 33p (haha)?

Johnathan Robertson, Victoria, Australia

1) You can use the A (assemble) function of the monitor, but to write a game it's not suitable. For example, Lemmings *takes up over 5000 lines of machine code and would take you hours to enter and check. A proper assembler (though difficult to get hold of) is essential. You could even buy a cross-development system from a games company.....*

2) Long enough to shorten your temper, and yet short enough to keep you focussed on your goal... it just depends who you are, and how much you want to learn.

3) Ever heard of International Reply Coupon or Postage-Paid Envelopes? Ask at your local post office.

Brian

THE NINJA WITH PROBLEMS

Dear Prof,

I've written to you because I want to solve my biggest programming problem ever! I'm making a split-screen routine with data lines, and a raster colour routine with data lines.

The problem us that it reads in the wrong DATA and gives a DATA error. Please help me!

I liked that Music Cassette listing in Issue Eight. Do you know of a program that would give better quality? Would a sound sampler give better quality?

Do you know of any routine to format more blocks on disk?

Kay 'The Ninja' Arnese, Norway.

Take a deep breath, open your ears and listen carefully.....

Arrange your DATA lines in the following order:

DATA lines for the split-screen

DATA for the colour routine

DATA for other things (sprites etc.)

Now, before you READ any DATA, enter a line that says RESTORE (not the key!). This will tell the computer to point to the first item of DATA.

Now use a FOR NEXT loop to READ in the split-screen data, eg:

```
FOR T=O TO amount of data
READ U
POKE location+T,U
NEXT
```

Repeat this for the colour routine and the other DATA, reading in exactly the right amount of DATA for each. This should cause you no further problems — every time you run the program it'll read in the data properly.

As for sampling, most sound samplers will give you a better quality of sound than Music Cassette, and if you're clever you can use the samples in your own programs.

Finally, you're stuck with 6464 blocks on a 1541 disk. It's possible to create more, but the disks become difficult to use — it's not worth the bother, if you ask me...

Brian

FILATELI AR EN TERVLIG HOBBY

Dear Prof,

1) Can I use my C64 and modem to send faxes?

2) How do you display something while loading?

3) Can I convert my C64 to a portable computer?

4) Can you attach a hard disk to the C64?

Kind regards.

Filip Norrgard, Vaasa, Finland

Yes, it's international month here on Brian's pages...

In numerical order, the answers are:

1) Maybe a fax machine would be easier?

2) See the next letter

3) Possibly, but it would weigh a lot. Commodore made a portable C64, known as the SX64, complete with disk drive and 5-inch colour screen. It sold fairly well (are you sure about that, Brian? — Ed), but then the novelty wore off and people were left with aching arms.....

4) Yes, but they're very expensive. See Lloyd's column in Issue Five for the address of a German company who can help....

By the way the title of this letter means 'Philately (stamp-collecting) is an interesting hobby' and comes from the post-mark on Filip's letter... YAWN!

Brian

Don't panic — I'll be back next month with more fun and informative ways to use your Commodore. But no hacking into mainframes and starting global thermonoclear war while I'm away, please. Write to me at:

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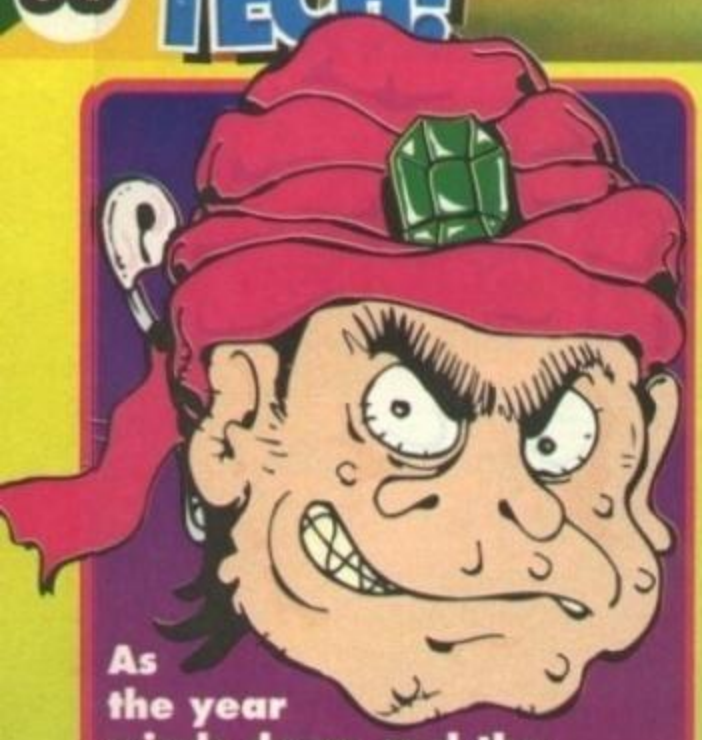

THE GA

As the year winds down and the number of shopping days to Christmas reduces, the man in the turban is back! It's Professor Brian Strain with another tutorial on the way to understanding how games are written. Having delved deeply (oo-er!) into sprites, it's time to wrap up that topic and proceed onto something else...

THE SPRITE DATA POINTERS

We've mentioned the sprite data pointer in previous lessons; it tells the computer where in memory to look for the numbers that make up a sprite. Of course, with eight sprites there are eight locations. However, because of the VIC chip's design we can only 'look' at 16k of memory at a time when we're dealing with graphics. The sprite data pointers are located after the screen memory (which can be moved). For now, we'll deal with how to locate your sprite's data when you first turn on (and without hundreds of extra POKEs).

When you first turn on, the VIC chip is 'looking' at the first 16k of memory from locations 0 to 16384. Screen memory is at 1024 to 2023 (a total of 1000 bytes) and the character set is the built-in one.

To find the sprite data pointers, take the start of screen memory, add 1016 and you'll find the address of the first pointer.

For example: screen memory is at 1024, sprite data pointer 0 (for sprite 0) is at 1024+1016=location 2040.

To work out what numbers to put into the data pointers, you need to know the address you store the data for a sprite's image. This is particularly important if you're animating sprites, caused by changing the data pointer to show a series of images (in the same way as television and films are a series of images). Again, here is an example of working out where the sprite data is in memory:

Suppose you have three sprites you wish to display, each of them a single 'frame'.

The data for the first is stored at 12288, the second at 12352 and the third at 12416.

Sprite 0 needs to be the first sprite in memory, so we'll need to POKE location 2040.

Sprites are stored as a block of 64 bytes in memory (the 64th byte is not displayed), so we can use the formula:

NM=location divided by 64 where NM will be the number to POKE into 2040.

So, we poke 2040, 12288/64 which equals 192.

As the next two sprites are stored consequently in memory, we know the second will be NM=193 and the third NM=194 (since they are 64 and 128 bytes onwards respectively, increasing NM by 1 and 2).

We could animate 0 by setting a loop like this:

```
100 FOR T=192 TO 194
110 POKE 2040, T
120 FOR DELAY=1 TO 100:NEXT DELAY
130 NEXT T
140 GOTO 100
```

This would change sprite 0 from the first to the second to the third image and repeat that cycle. I'll leave you to work out how to program an animation where you go forward and then backward through a series of 'frames'.

The sprite data locations can only hold a number between 0 and 255. This means there are 256 possible sprite 'frames' between locations 0 and 16384. However, the computer uses much of this area to store BASIC programs and important information (including the screen). I suggest you NEVER store sprites below 8192 (a sprite data pointer number of 128). Even short BASIC programs can go over this, so be careful.

If you only need one or two sprites at a time, you can store them in the CASSETTE BUFFER. This is located at locations 828, to 1019, giving room for 4 sprites (POKE the sprite data pointer with 13, 14, 15, or 16). But this area will be overwritten if you access tape or disk, so don't use it if you'll be doing any loading or saving.

KEEPING IN CHARACTER

So far in this series (and if you're not a regular reader, save up for the back issues!) I've covered sprites that appear in front (and occasionally behind and around) the background. But there's been very little mention of the background itself. If you've grasped and understood a lot of the information on designing and changing sprites, it will come in handy for designing and changing CHARACTERS. But first, there are some important modes to discuss. Let's start at the beginning with text mode. When you switch on your C64/C64C/C128 or whatever, you get a message written in upper-case characters on a 40 column by 25 row screen. This is text (or sometimes called business) mode. Using the ROM character set is the technical term for an area of memory that contains the bytes that make up all the available characters, which includes basic graphic symbols.

The next step is to press Commodore and SHIFT. This turns your machine into lower case mode. Now you have less graphics but more readable text. If you want to stop people switching between the 2 modes, you can use PRINT CHR$ (8) to disable and PRINT CHR$ (9) to enable the Commodore and shift keypress. That will stop them messing up your display, and is an important thing to remember when you define your own characters, a task we'll look at in detail in the future.

Now, if you've seen the ROM character set you will see that all the characters are fixed at 8 pixels across by 8 pixels down. Like sprites, we have the option of halving the horizontal resolution to provide MULTICOLOUR MODE. You can even display multicolour and monochrome (single-colour) characters on the same screen. There are more restrictions than with sprites, but more on that next month.

Oh, and in case you thought that Commodore hadn't provided you with enough ways to use characters, you also have

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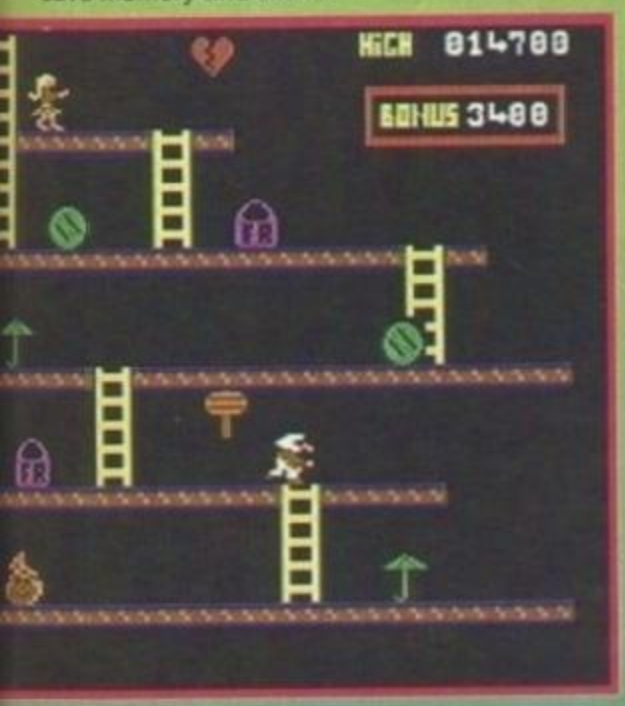
MES GURU

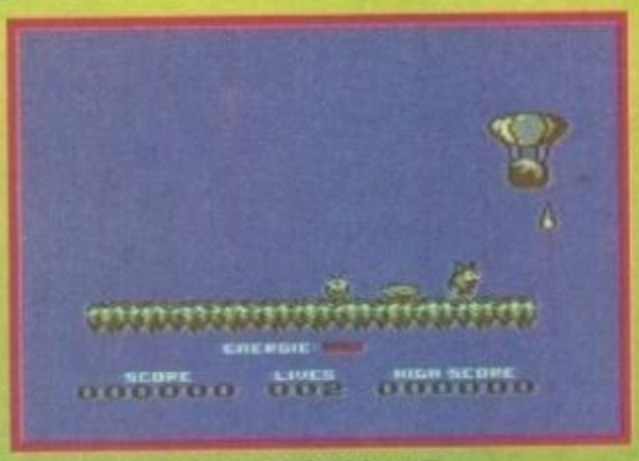
EXTENDED BACKGROUND MODE. This limits you to 64 characters, but each can be displayed in a different character colour and one of 4 background colours, which compares with multcolour mode's fixed background colour plus two fixed multicolours plus one of eight character colours.

Finally, you can re-define the characters so you plot more than one at a time to make up an image. For example, you can create a character set that's twice as wide and twice as high as the built-in one, so to print a letter 'A' you need to print four characters in a square. This is the basic method you need to create backgrounds for games; making up large 'pieces' of the background from several characters, and employing a simple method called 'blocks' helps save memory and time...



LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Rather than spend hours on theory, here's a smart program for you to try out. It's a simple character editor and it allows you to edit an 8 by 8 block on-screen, and turns it into the DATA you'll need to POKE into memory. I'll give you the program next month to turn the DATA into actual characters, but for now I'd like to thank Tony 'The Penguin' Crowe for sending the original program, which I've changed slightly to give a better idea of what's happening. The instructions are included in the program, so type it in and RUN it, and get designing some monochrome characters.




```
10 POKE646,15:PRINTCHR$ (147)
20 CLR:POKE53281,0:POKE53280,0
30 FORT=1T08:D$(Y)="000":CR(Y)=0:NEXT
40 GOSUB370
50 FORI=OTO62:POKE832+I,O=NEXTI
60 POKE832,255:POKE853,255
70 FORK=835TO850STEP3:POKEK,129:
   NEXTK
80 POKE2040,13:POKE53287,1:POKE53296,1
90 POKE53269,1:POKE211,O:POKE214,12:
   SYS58732
100 PRINT"Q:SETPIXEL W:CLEAR PIXEL
    C:CLEAR CHAR"
110 FORD=1T08:FORI=1T08
120 POKE1024+(D*40)+I,46:NEXTI, D
130 FORY=1TO8:GOSUB340:NEXTY
140 X=1:Y=1
150 IFX>8 THEN X=8
160 IFX<1 THEN X=1
170 IFY>8 THEN Y=8
180 IFY<1 THEN Y=1
190 POKE53248,24+(X*8):POKE53249,50
    +(Y*8)
200 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN200
210 A=ASC(A$)
220 IFA=157 THEN X=X-1:GOTO150
230 IFA=29 THEN X=X+1:GOTO150
240 IFA=145 THEN Y=Y-1:GOTO150
250 IFA=17 THEN Y=Y+1:GOTO150
260 IFA$="Q" THEN 300
270 IFA$="W" THEN 320
280 IFA$="C" THEN 10
290 GOTO200
300 POKE1024+(40^Y)+X,160
310 CR(Y)=CR(Y)OR2(8-X):GOTO340
320 POKE1024+(40^Y)+X,46
330 CR(Y)=CR(Y) AND (255-(2(8-X)))
340 D$(Y)=MID$(STR$(CR(Y)),
    2,LEN(STR$(CR(Y)))-1)
350 IFLEN(D$(Y))<>3THEN
D$(Y)="O"+D$(Y):GOTO350
360 POKE211,10:POKE214,Y:SYS58732:
    PRINTD$(Y):GOTO150
370 FORT=1T08:POKE211,10:POKE214,T:
    SYS58732:PRINTD$ (Y)
380 NEXTT:RETURN
```

Yes, it's the time to pack away my turban for another month. Next month I'll delve deeper (my favourite phrase again) into the mysteries of character sets. Beat the rush, post early, send your suggestions, questions or examples of your work to: TheGamesGuru, Commodore Force, Impact magazines,Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW
It just remains for me to say those immortal words: DON'T DRINK AND EAT TOO MUCH, YOU'LL FALL ASLEEP!

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BASH YER BRAINS

Hail ye! Cast down your bloody axe and sit beside my fire; oh, excuse the pong — that'll be the boiled Orc droppings I'm having for tea, help yourself. Actually I've been in quite a charitable mood all month. Only last week a traveller passed this way in search of food and shelter and was sent away with a flea in his ear — normally he'd have got a broadsword through the neck to go with it! Come to think of it I've not done a decent decapitation in ages. Come hither into my cave — I've something to show you... no, come back... oh botheration!

GRUNTS

In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind did moan, Bash was in his cavern, sitting all alone. Suddenly he'd cracked it! Leaned back and gave a groan, Barbarians aren't so stupid, he'd written his own poem!

Why should Barbarians have the reputation for being all brawn and no brain? After all, I sit here and solve one tricky adventure after another. Surely you need some intelligence to do that. Odin knows — some of the adventures we get these days are difficult enough to tax the brain of even the shortest of planks. Speaking of brains, I just heard Tony Collins of Guild software, one of the main sources of C64 adventures, is going on a six month computing course, so his range of PD titles and Commodore catalogue, under licence, have been temporarily handed over to Jason McKensie of Binary Zone PD, until such time as he is able to cope with the workload once more. Things aren't quite settled at the moment and I've not heard directly from either Tony or Jason. Most authors of games in The Guild Catalogues have yet to be informed of what's going on and I doubt anything will be settled officially until they've been contacted. Watch this space for further developments.

BASH

I say 'bumper' because a whole batch of letters went astray recently, then all arrived together, so apologies in advance for any delay in sending out personal replies — it has been a particularly hectic month here. Anyway, down to business...

Firstly I must mention **Damian Steele**, of Paignton, who has sent in, yet again, a whole batch of solutions to help out other readers. Thanks Damian, I appreciate it very much.

Shona McConnell of Glasgow also sent me some solutions and a whole list of questions too numerous to list here. Shona tells me she's been meaning to write for ages but never got around to it until now. She also mentions that the column is at least five pages too short! In Atalan she can't figure out how to get the plank of wood to bridge the chasm and in *Black Knight Pt 2* she can't get rid of the guard on the rope bridge. Well, to sort the chasm out you should just DROP WOOD when you're at the chasm — it should fall in the right place. The guard on the rope bridge can be sorted out if you pull the young sapling that's nearby. This should spring back over the bridge and should break his neck for you — lots of lovely gory stuff there.

Paul Mullen also of Glasgow writes to say that he can't find the lamp in *Dracula*. Well Paul, it is as you fear, in the maze. Not to worry though, it isn't far away. Just go E, S, E, S, to find the cord that you need and then go W to find

DAVY JONES' LOCKER

RIVER SOFTWARE, £2.50 Cassette or Disk.

From the prolific pen of Jack Lockerby and Roger Betts comes *Davy Jones' Locker*. Anyone who played *Lifeboat*, a previous River Adventure, will find the scenario quite familiar. It was based on the first few days to follow a shipwreck, and *DJL* continues the story. It's extremely tongue-in-cheek and, as with *Lifeboat*, a very entertaining and humorous romp. Be warned though; it's choc full of the most excruciating puns and hoary old jokes. For example, early on in the game you find yourself afloat in a dinghy. After a while a small squid swims up to you. EXAMINE SQUID — it's not at all well. GET SQUID — you take the poorly squid. Shortly after this you come across the entrance to a cave presided over by a Mermaid. She refuses to allow you to enter until you pay her £7. However, don't waste your time searching for cash, there isn't any. Just GIVE SQUID — the Mermaid takes the squid, 'Alright' she says, 'Sick squid will do... you can owe me the other pound!' I know! It is a dreadful groaner — but I loved it! And there's more — lots more!

The game's filled to capacity with all sorts of creatures and people, all of whom interact very well. There are also some great features to help you out when you get stuck because, although this isn't a a particularly difficult adventure on the whole, you *will* get stuck — believe me. One that's suitable for both the beginner and adventure veteran alike.

DJL is expertly written and, as with all River Adventures, bug-free — it's a real joy to play. It's actually been around for quite some time now, but has lost none of its charm — no C64 adventurer should be without this little gem in their collection. If it makes old Bash chuckle then it'll have you in hysterics, as well as giving many an enjoyable hour of fun and head scratching.

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'S BUMPER MAILBAG

the lamp which, strangely, wasn't there when you past earlier. Paul also asks 'Is it better, when writing your own adventure to have the instructions and storyline on paper so the game starts immediately — as with *Corya* — or to write the introduction within the game like in *Golden EggCup?* Paul also asks where on earth he can get his trusty Commodore repaired or serviced. With the game instructions, I look at it in two ways. It cuts down on costs to include them within your game tape/disk but, and it is a big but, those naughty pirates would find life a lot more difficult if they didn't have the instructions to go by, as when they're on a separate sheet they rarely get passed on. As for getting your computer repaired, I know when mine goes wrong I happen to know a very clever fellow just nearby who's an absolutely wizard at inexpensive repairs — not surprisingly, he IS a wizard, and also very scared of me. If you don't know of anyone like that then I'd suggest you pop along to your nearest Dixons, Currys or Tandy store and ask them for help. They've helped me in the past in arranging to send computers off for repair at a reasonable standard charge — pop along and see what they suggest.

The next letter was from a 'budding Basher' called **Richard Canavan** of Dublin who seems to be getting in a dreadful mess in *Rigel's Revenge*. Never fear, help is here! What you're looking for are the nightsights. The Medikit is extremely important. Get it, wear it, and go UP and FORCIBLY REMOVE BAR, EXAMINE MEDIKIT/BELT, EXAMINE RED BUTTON (stimulant), EXAMINE GREEN BUTTON (protein), PRESS RED BUTTON, BEND BAR, REMOVE MEDIKIT/BELT, THROW MEDIKIT THROUGH WINDOW, REMOVE SUIT, THROW SUIT THROUGH WINDOW, N, GET SUIT, WEAR SUIT, GET MEDIKIT, WEAR MEDIKIT. Yes you can feed the dog - it wants the bone. When you come across the door with the wire you should EXAMINE DOOR, REMOVE WIRE, OPEN DOOR. When you find the Rigel Uniform you can disguise yourself and save yourself a lot of grief!

Anthony Norton of Bridlington, has been stuck on and off for three years trying to complete one of my favourite 'Golden Oldies', called *Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle* by Scott Adams. Now that's what I call dedication! He's unable to get through the Stone Door or get the tin can from the battlements. I have to confess it's years since I played this one and cannot think which stone door is causing the problem. I do know that sometimes the parser can cause more problems than the game itself, so do try PUSH DOOR, PULL DOOR, GO DOOR etc. If you can get me a few more pointers to where exactly the problem is, I'll try and help further. To get the can from the battlements you should GET BRICK, CAST DIZZY DEAN SPELL, THROW BRICK, AT CAN, E, E, GET CAN, OPEN CAN, WITH METAL, LOOK CAN.

Caroline Penrith of Hardwicke writes to tell me that she's stuck playing part one of that classic/one of a kind adventure, *Macbeth* by Creative Sparks. Now we are REALLY talking 'Golden Oldies'. So old in fact, I can hardly remember it, as I played this one absolutely ages ago. Caroline can get to the beach but doesn't know what to do next. The only help I can give is to say that I remember sailing over to the island of Iona (think that was the name) in a sieve with the aid of a cat and a severed thumb! Perhaps another kind reader can come forward with some further, more specific help for this one!

Dianne Gregory of Blackford writes, 'I can't get into the cave in *Black Knight* — I've tried ringing the bell, reading the scroll and burning the incense but still can't get past the evil force. I'm also stuck at the chasm and don't know where to use the bible, hammer, chastity belt, mistletoe, arrow and horseshoe.' Well, Dianne, the only thing you forgot to do at the cave was to wave the bible. Once inside you should be carrying the horseshoe and you'll soon find out what to do with your other items.

Stephen Hawker of Leicester writes to ask what he should do after tying the anchor to the rope in *Atalan*. Tying the anchor to the rope creates a crude grappling iron, so go to the base of the cliff and THROW ANCHOR/ROPE and you will soon find that the game opens up for you.

Ruyoul Izzard of Leicester, tells me that he's stuck in *Starcross* by Infocom and would like to know how to get the Red Crystal rod from the nesting cage in the Zoo, how to get the Purple crystal rod from the control room and how to open the bubble hatch.

Throw the Tape Library at the nest and while the ratants look at you in terror, grab the red rod and the tape library.

Getting the purple crystal rod from the control room is a bit more complicated. I assume you've figured out the red and blue disks are transporter disks? Well the only way you can get out safely with the purple rod is to use the transporter disks. If you try to get back the way you came in you'll be killed off for violating a sacred shrine. You lose one of the transporters though, so do remember to use them to get a couple of other rods first, ie the one from the trash in the room where the cleaner mouse goes, and to get what you need from the floating sphere. Only when you've collected all the rods should you go to the bubble as it's a one way trip. I'll give you a cryptic tip to help with this. A weapon can be found that has something hidden inside it. It also has a limited amount of ammo. Think of a blast of ammo when you are weightless and you'll get the picture. Now you can go bubble hopping!

CONTACT POINT

River Software, 44
Hyde Place, Aylesham,
Canterbury, Kent
CT3 3AL.

Cheques etc payable to Mr J A Lockerby.

Right, that's all we've room for this issue. There'll be plenty more letters next month, as I still have a lot to catch up with. Keep your swords sharp and your little brass lanterns bright until then. Oh, and if you see that Miles Guttery, tell him if he comes near my adventure section, I'll

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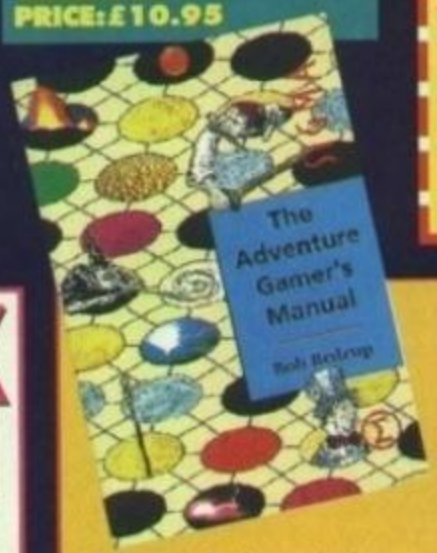

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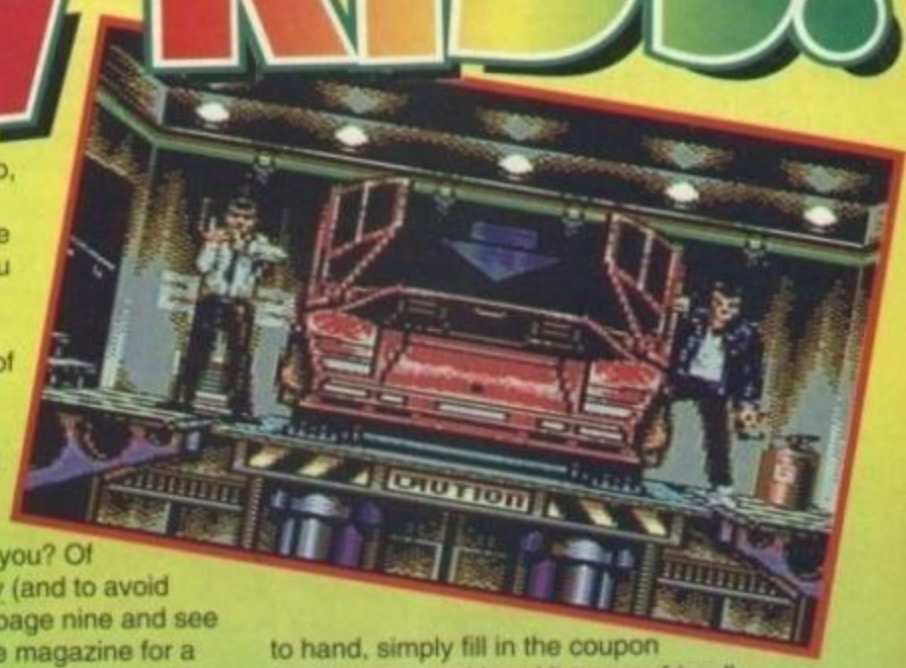
SEE YOU NEXT MONTH, KIDS!

Phewee — another issue finally comes to an end. There's no rest for the wicked, though. No sooner do we finish one episode of COMMODORE FORCE ,than we're inundated with stuff for the next. There's more tips to compile, new letters to answer and articles by the bucket-load. Not that we're complaining — we thrive on the pressure. Unlike those slackers at Nat West (are we sure about this — Ed) it certainly *is* work work work for the COMMODORE FORCE gang. Sometimes it seems there's simply not enough days in the month — February being a prime example, but that aside you can't really complain about the way our year is arranged. January at the start, Christmas at the end and a big fat summer in between.

Still, we s'pose you're now dying to know what delights await for our 13th issue — unlucky for you if you don't buy it. Well, after *our* top 100 C64 games last ish, it's now your turn. There were one or two somewhat controversial entries so, compiled from the mountains of surveys you sent in, we'll have the definitive top 100 according to you lot. Then, of course, they'll be all the usual waffle, more stunning Reel Action, and a large helping of oddness for good measure. COMMODORE FORCE #13 hits the shelves on 18 November, but get in early — they'll be selling like hot pyjamas and you wouldn't want to miss out, would you? Of course you wouldn't! Alternatively (and to avoid possible disappointment) turn to page nine and see how to subscribe to your favourite magazine for a whole year. If, however, you don't have the readies to hand, simply fill in the coupon on this page and hand it to your friendly newsagent. He'll then keep a copy safe and cosy for you to collect at your leisure.



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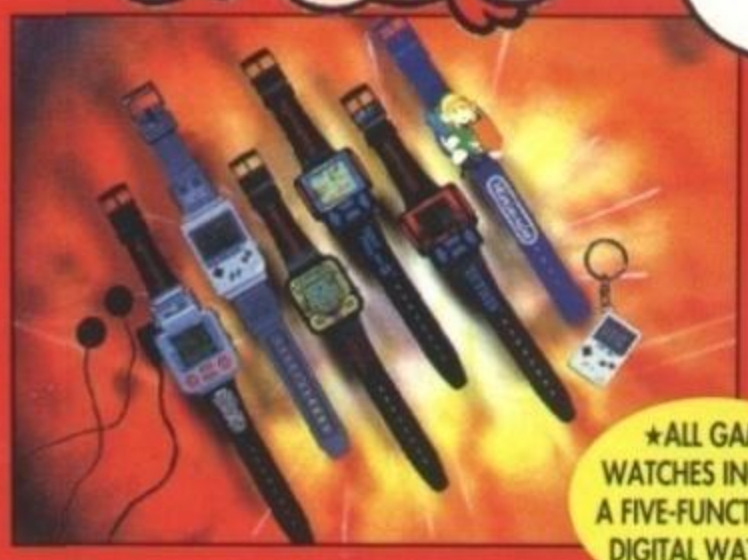

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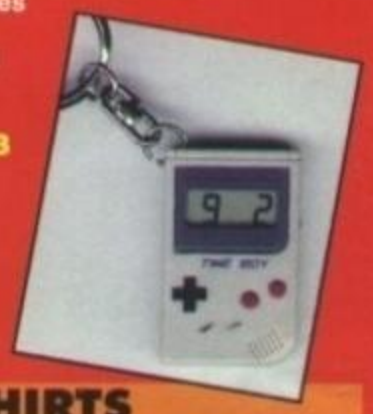

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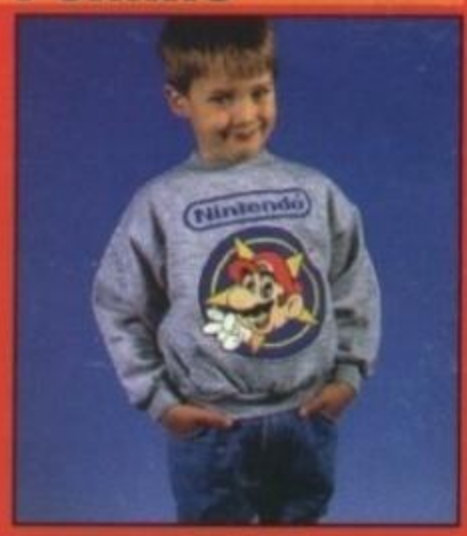

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